

# EXHIBIT 8

EX-4.1 2 ex4-1.htm RIGHTS AGREEMENT

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[ASA Gold and Precious Metals Limited - 8K](#)

Exhibit 4.1

ASA GOLD AND PRECIOUS METALS LIMITED

And

COMPUTERSHARE TRUST COMPANY, N.A.,  
AS RIGHTS AGENT

Rights Agreement

Dated as of April 26, 2024

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Rights Agreement (the “Agreement”), dated as of April 26, 2024 (the “Effective Date”), between ASA Gold and Precious Metals Limited, a Bermuda exempted limited liability company (the “Company”), and Computershare Trust Company, N.A., a federally chartered trust company, as rights agent (the “Rights Agent”).

The Board of Directors of the Company (the “Board”) has authorized and declared a dividend of one common share purchase right (a “Right”) for each Common Share (as hereinafter defined) of the Company outstanding on May 9, 2024 (the “Record Date”), each Right representing the right to purchase one Common Share, upon the terms and subject to the conditions herein set forth, and has further authorized and directed the issuance of one Right with respect to each Common Share that shall become outstanding between the Record Date and the earliest of the Distribution Date, the Redemption Date and the Final Expiration Date (as such terms are hereinafter defined).

Accordingly, in consideration of the premises and the mutual agreements herein set forth, the parties hereby agree as follows:

Section 1. Definitions. For purposes of this Agreement, the following terms have the meanings indicated:

(a) “Acquiring Person” shall mean any Person who or which, together with all Affiliates and Associates of such Person, shall be the Beneficial Owner of 15% or more of the Common Shares of the Company then outstanding, but shall not include (i) the Company, (ii) any Subsidiary of the Company, or (iii) any employee benefit plan of the Company or any Subsidiary of the Company, or any entity holding Common Shares for or pursuant to the terms of any such plan. Notwithstanding the foregoing, no Person shall become an “Acquiring Person” as the result of an acquisition of Common Shares by the Company which, by reducing the number of Common Shares of the Company outstanding, increases the proportionate number of Common Shares of the Company Beneficially Owned by such Person to 15% or more of the Common Shares of the Company then outstanding; provided, however, that, if a Person shall become the Beneficial Owner of 15% or more of the Common Shares of the Company then outstanding by reason of share purchases by the Company and shall, after the public announcement of such share purchases by the Company, become the Beneficial Owner of any additional Common Shares of the Company, then such Person shall be deemed to be an “Acquiring Person”. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if (i) the Board determines in good faith that a Person who would otherwise be an “Acquiring Person,” as defined pursuant to the foregoing provisions of this paragraph (a), has become such inadvertently, and such Person divests as promptly as practicable a sufficient number of Common Shares so that such Person would no longer be an “Acquiring Person,” as defined pursuant to the foregoing provisions of this paragraph (a), or (ii) if a Person, together with all Affiliates and Associates of such Person, becomes the Beneficial Owner of 15% or more of the Common Shares of the Company then outstanding solely as a result of such Person’s entering into an agreement, arrangement or understanding (including an irrevocable proxy or consent) whereby such Person obtains the right to vote such Common Shares and prior to the time such agreement, arrangement or understanding is entered into the Board has approved in advance either (x) a merger, consolidation or similar transaction to which such Person or an Affiliate of such Person is a party or (y) such agreement, arrangement or understanding with such Person, then in either

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case such Person shall not be deemed to be an “Acquiring Person” for any purposes of this Agreement; provided, however, that if after such permitted acquisition, such Person, together with all Affiliates and Associates of such Person, becomes the Beneficial Owner of any additional Common Shares of the Company not so approved in advance by the Board which, together with all Common Shares of the Company Beneficially Owned by the Person, together with all Affiliates or Associates of such Person, totals 15% or more of the Common Shares then outstanding, then such Person shall be deemed to be an Acquiring Person. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if a bona fide swaps dealer who would otherwise be an “Acquiring Person” has become so as a result of its actions in the ordinary course of its business that the Board determines, in its sole discretion, were taken without the intent or effect of evading or assisting any other Person to evade the purposes and intent of this Agreement, or otherwise seeking to control or influence the management or policies of the Company, then, and unless and until the Board shall otherwise determine, such Person shall not be deemed to be an “Acquiring Person” for any purposes of this Agreement. No Person shall be considered an Acquiring Person if such Person is the Beneficial Owner, as of the time of the first public announcement of the adoption of this Agreement (including any shares Beneficial Ownership of which is acquired on the date of announcement pursuant to orders placed prior to becoming aware of such announcement), of 15%, or more of Common Shares then outstanding, unless and until such Person shall, after the time of such first public announcement of the adoption of this Agreement, become the Beneficial Owner of additional shares of Common Shares representing 0.25% or more of the shares of Common Shares then outstanding, other than at a time when such Person is the Beneficial Owner of less than 15% of the outstanding Common Shares; provided that such acquisition does not cause such Person to then become the Beneficial Owner of 15% or more of Common Shares then outstanding.

(b) “Act” shall mean the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (or any comparable or successor law or regulation).

(c) “Adjustment Shares” shall have the meaning set forth in Section 11(a)(ii) hereof.

(d) “Affiliate” shall have the meaning ascribed to such term in Rule 12b-2 of the General Rules and Regulations under the Exchange Act.

(e) “Associate” shall have the meaning ascribed to such term in Rule 12b-2 of the General Rules and Regulations under the Exchange Act.

(f) A Person shall be deemed the “Beneficial Owner” of and shall be deemed to “Beneficially Own” any securities:

(i) which such Person or any of such Person’s Affiliates or Associates, directly or indirectly, beneficially owns (as determined pursuant to the General Rules and Regulations under the Exchange Act);

(ii) which such Person or any of such Person's Affiliates or Associates has (A) the right or the obligation to acquire (whether such right is exercisable, or such obligation is required to be performed, immediately or only after the passage of time) pursuant to any agreement, arrangement or understanding (whether or not in writing) (other than customary agreements with and between underwriters and selling group members with respect to a bona fide public offering of securities), or upon the exercise of conversion rights, exchange rights, rights (other than these Rights), warrants or options, or otherwise; provided, however, that a Person shall not be deemed the Beneficial Owner of, or to Beneficially Own, (1) securities tendered pursuant to a tender or exchange offer made by or on behalf of such Person or any of such Person's Affiliates or Associates until such tendered securities are accepted for purchase or exchange, (2) securities issuable upon exercise of Rights at any time prior to the occurrence of a Triggering Event, or (3) securities issuable upon exercise of Rights from and after the occurrence of a Triggering Event which Rights were acquired by such Person or any of such Person's Affiliates or Associates prior to the Distribution Date or pursuant to Section 3(a) or Section 22 hereof (the "Original Rights") or pursuant to Section 11(a)(i) hereof in connection with an adjustment made with respect to any Original Rights; or (B) the right to vote (or direct the vote of) or dispose (or direct the disposition) of, including pursuant to any agreement, arrangement or understanding (whether or not in writing); provided, however, that a Person shall not be deemed the Beneficial Owner of, or to Beneficially Own, any security if such agreement, arrangement or understanding to vote such security (1) arises solely from a revocable proxy or consent given to such Person in response to a public proxy or consent solicitation made pursuant to, and in accordance with, the applicable rules and regulations promulgated under the Exchange Act and (2) is not also then reportable on Schedule 13D or Schedule 13G under the Exchange Act (or any comparable or successor report);

(iii) which are beneficially owned, directly or indirectly, by any other Person with which such Person or any of such Person's Affiliates or Associates has any agreement, arrangement or understanding (whether or not in writing) (other than customary agreements with and between underwriters and selling group members with respect to a bona fide public offering of securities) for the purpose of acquiring, holding, voting (except to the extent contemplated by the proviso Section 1(g)(ii)(B) hereof) or disposing of any securities of the Company; or

(iv) in respect of which such Person or any of such Person's Affiliates or Associates has a Synthetic Long Position;

Notwithstanding anything in this definition of Beneficial Ownership to the contrary, the phrase "then outstanding", when used with reference to a Person's Beneficial Ownership of securities of the Company, shall mean the number of such securities then actually issued and outstanding together with the number of such securities not then actually issued and outstanding which such Person would be deemed to Beneficially Own hereunder.

(g) "Board" shall have the meaning set forth in the second paragraph hereof.

(h) "Business Day" shall mean any day other than a Saturday, a Sunday, or a day on which banking institutions in Bermuda or the City of New York, New York are authorized or obligated by law or executive order to close.

(i) “Close of Business” on any given date shall mean 5:00 P.M., Bermuda time, on such date; provided, however, that, if such date is not a Business Day, it shall mean 5:00 P.M., Bermuda time, on the next succeeding Business Day.

(j) “Code” shall mean the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or any successor provision or replacement provision.

(k) “Common Shares” when used with reference to the Company shall mean the common shares, par value \$1.00 per share, of the Company. “Common Shares” when used with reference to any Person other than the Company shall mean the capital stock (or equity interest) with the greatest voting power of such other Person or, if such other Person is a Subsidiary of another Person, the Person or Persons which ultimately control such first-mentioned Person.

(l) “Company” shall have the meaning set forth in the preamble.

(m) “Current Value” shall have the meaning set forth in Section 11(a)(iii) hereof.

(n) “Distribution Date” shall have the meaning set forth in Section 3(a) hereof.

(o) “Equivalent Common Shares” shall have the meaning set forth in Section 11(a)(iii) hereof.

(p) “Exchange Act” shall mean the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended and in effect on the date of this Agreement (or any comparable or successor law or regulation).

(q) “Exchange Ratio” shall have the meaning set forth in Section 24(a) hereof.

(r) “Expiration Date” shall have the meaning set forth in Section 7(a) hereof.

(s) “Final Expiration Date” shall mean the Close of Business on August 23, 2024.

(t) “Nasdaq” shall mean The Nasdaq Global Market LLC or any of its listing venues.

(u) “NYSE” shall mean the New York Stock Exchange LLC.

(v) [Reserved].

(w) “Person” shall mean any individual, partnership, firm, corporation, limited liability company, association, trust (including a trust qualified under Sections 401(a) or 501(c)(17) of the Code), a portion of a trust permanently set aside for or to be used exclusively for the purposes described in Section 642(c) of the Code, association, private foundation within the meaning of Section 509(a) of the Code, joint stock company, unincorporated organization or other entity, and shall include any successor (by merger or otherwise) of such entity, as well as any group under Rule 13d-5(b)(1) of the Exchange Act.

(x) “Principal Party” shall have the meaning set forth in Section 13(b) hereof.



- (y) "Purchase Price" shall have the meaning set forth in Section 4(a) hereof.
- (z) "Record Date" shall have the meaning set forth in the second paragraph hereof.
- (aa) "Redemption Date" shall have the meaning set forth in Section 7(a) hereof.
- (bb) "Redemption Price" shall have the meaning set forth in Section 23(a) hereof.
- (cc) "Right" shall have the meaning set forth in the second paragraph hereof.
- (dd) "Right Certificate" shall have the meaning set forth in Section 3(a) hereof.
- (ee) "Rights Agent" shall have the meaning set forth in the preamble.
- (ff) "Section 11(a)(ii) Event" shall mean any event described in Section 11(a)(ii) hereof.
- (gg) "Section 11(a)(ii) Trigger Date" shall have the meaning set forth in Section 11(a)(iii) hereof.
- (hh) "Section 13 Event" shall mean any event described in clauses (x), (y) or (z) of Section 13(a) hereof.
- (ii) "Shares Acquisition Date" shall mean the first date of public announcement (which, for purposes of this definition, shall include, without limitation, a report filed or amended pursuant to Section 13(d) and/or Section 13(g) under the Exchange Act) by the Company or an Acquiring Person indicating that an Acquiring Person has become such, or such earlier date as a majority of the Board shall become aware of the existence of an Acquiring Person; provided, that if such Person is determined by the Board not to be or have become an Acquiring Person, then no Shares Acquisition Date shall be deemed to have occurred.
- (jj) "Spread" shall have the meaning set forth in Section 11(a)(iii) hereof.
- (kk) "Subsidiary" of any Person shall mean any corporation or other entity of which a majority of the voting power of the voting equity securities or equity interest is Beneficially Owned, directly or indirectly, by such Person.
- (ll) "Substitution Period" shall have the meaning set forth in Section 11(a)(iii).
- (mm) "Summary of Rights" shall have the meaning set forth in Section 3(b) hereof.

(nn) “Synthetic Long Position” shall mean, with respect to any security, any option, swap, warrant, convertible security, stock appreciation right or other contractual right, whether or not presently exercisable, which has an exercise or conversion privilege or a settlement payment or mechanism at a price related to such security or a value determined in whole or part with reference to, or derived in whole or in part from, the market price or value of such security (without regard to whether such instrument or right (i) conveys any voting power to such Person or any Affiliate or Associate thereof, or (ii) is required to be, or capable of being, settled through delivery of such securities) and which increases in value as the value of such security increases or which provides to the holder of such instrument or right an opportunity, directly or indirectly, to profit or share in any profit derived from any increase in the value of such security, but shall not include interests in broad-based index options, broad-based index futures, and broad-based publicly traded market baskets of stocks approved for trading by the appropriate federal governmental authority. The number of securities in respect of which a Person has a Synthetic Long Position shall be the notional or other number of securities specified in the documentation evidencing the Synthetic Long Position as being subject to be acquired upon the exercise or settlement of the applicable right or as the basis upon which the value or settlement amount of such right, or the opportunity of the holder of such right to profit or share in any profit, is to be calculated in whole or in part or, if no such number of securities is specified in such filing or documentation, as determined by the Board in good faith to be the number of securities to which the Synthetic Long Position relates.

(oo) “Trading Day” shall mean a day on which the principal national securities exchange on which the Common Shares or other referenced securities are listed or admitted to trading is open for the transaction of business, or, if the Common Shares or other referenced securities are not listed or admitted to trading on any national securities exchange, a Business Day.

(pp) “Triggering Event” shall mean any Section 11(a)(ii) Event or any Section 13 Event.

Section 2. Appointment of Rights Agent. The Company hereby appoints the Rights Agent to act as agent for the Company in accordance with the express terms and conditions set forth herein (and no implied terms or conditions), and the Rights Agent hereby accepts such appointment. The Company may from time to time appoint such co-rights agents as it may deem necessary or desirable (the term “Rights Agent” being used herein to refer, collectively, to the Rights Agent together with any such co-Rights Agents), upon ten (10) days prior written notice to the Rights Agent. In the event the Company appoints one or more co-rights agents, the respective duties of the Rights Agent and any co-rights agents under the provisions of this Agreement shall be as the Company shall reasonably determine, provided that such duties are consistent with the terms and conditions of this Agreement and that contemporaneously with such appointment the Company will notify, in writing, the Rights Agent and any co-rights agents of such respective duties. The Rights Agent shall have no duty to supervise, and shall in no event be liable for, the acts or omissions of any such co-rights agents.

### Section 3. Issue of Right Certificates.

(a) Until the earlier of (i) the Close of Business on the tenth Business Day after the Shares Acquisition Date (or, if the tenth Business Day after the Shares Acquisition Date occurs before the Record Date, the Close of Business on the Record Date), or (ii) the Close of Business on the tenth Business Day (or such later date as the Board shall determine before such Person becomes an Acquiring Person) after the date that a tender or exchange offer by any Person (other than the Company, any Subsidiary of the Company, any employee benefit plan or compensation arrangement of the Company or of any Subsidiary of the Company, or any Person or entity organized, appointed or established by the Company for or pursuant to the

terms of any such plan) is first published or sent or given within the meaning of Rule 14d-2(a) of the General Rules and Regulations under the Exchange Act, if upon consummation thereof, such Person would be the Beneficial Owner of 15% or more of the Common Shares then outstanding (or if such tenth Business Day occurs before the Record Date, the Close of Business on the Record Date) (the earlier of (i) and (ii) being herein referred to as the "Distribution Date"), (x) the Rights, unless earlier expired, redeemed or terminated, will be evidenced (subject to the provisions of Section 3(b) hereof) by the certificates for Common Shares of the Company registered in the names of the holders thereof (which certificates shall also be deemed to be Right Certificates) and not by separate Right Certificates, and Rights associated with any uncertificated Common Shares will be evidenced (subject to the provisions of Section 3(d) hereof) by the registration of such Common Shares in the Company's share register in the names of the holders thereof (which registration shall also be deemed to be registration of ownership of the associated Rights) and not by separate Right Certificates, and (y) the right to receive Right Certificates will be transferable only in connection with the transfer of Common Shares of the Company; provided, however, that if a tender or exchange offer is terminated prior to the occurrence of a Distribution Date, then no Distribution Date shall occur as a result of such tender or exchange offer. As soon as practicable after the Distribution Date, the Company will prepare and execute, and upon the written request of the Company, the Rights Agent will countersign (in manual, facsimile, or other electronic form), and the Company will send or cause to be sent (and the Rights Agent will, if requested and provided with all relevant information and documents, in the discretion of the Rights Agent, at the expense of the Company, send or cause to be sent), to each record holder of Common Shares of the Company as of the Close of Business on the Distribution Date, at the address of such holder shown on the records of the Company or the transfer agent or registrar for the Common Shares, a Right Certificate, in substantially the form of Exhibit A hereto (a "Right Certificate"), evidencing one Right for each Common Share so held, subject to adjustment as provided herein. As of the Distribution Date, the Rights will be evidenced solely by such Right Certificates. The Company shall, as promptly as practicable, notify the Rights Agent in writing upon the occurrence of the Distribution Date and, if such notification is given orally, the Company shall confirm same in writing on or prior to the Business Day next following. Until such notice is received by the Rights Agent, the Rights Agent may presume conclusively for all purposes that the Distribution Date has not occurred.

(b) The Company will make available, as promptly as practicable following the Record Date, a copy of the Summary of Rights to Purchase Common Shares, in substantially the form of Exhibit B hereto (the "Summary of Rights"), to any holder of Rights who may so request from time to time prior to the Expiration Date. With respect to certificates for Common Shares of the Company outstanding as of the Record Date, or issued subsequent to the Record Date, unless and until the Distribution Date shall occur, the Rights will be evidenced by such certificates registered in the names of the holders thereof together with a copy of the Summary of Rights attached thereto. With respect to uncertificated Common Shares outstanding as of the Close of Business on the Record Date, unless and until the Distribution Date shall occur, the Rights will be evidenced by the registration of such Common Shares in the Company's share register in the names of the holders thereof. Until the earlier of the Distribution Date or the Final Expiration Date, the surrender for transfer of any certificate for Common Shares of the Company outstanding on the Record Date, with or without a copy of the Summary of Rights attached thereto, shall also constitute the surrender for transfer of the Rights associated with the Common Shares of the Company represented thereby, and the registration of transfer of ownership of any uncertificated Common Shares in respect of which Rights have been issued shall also constitute the transfer of the Rights associated with the Common Shares the ownership of which is so transferred. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary set forth in this Agreement, upon the effectiveness of a redemption pursuant to Section 23 hereof or an exchange pursuant to Section 24 hereof, the Company shall not thereafter issue any additional Rights and, for the avoidance of doubt, no Rights shall be attached to or shall be issued with any Common Shares (including any Common Shares issued pursuant to an exchange) at any time thereafter.

(c) Rights shall be issued in respect of all Common Shares outstanding as of the Record Date or issued after the Record Date but prior to the earlier of the Distribution Date and the Expiration Date. In addition, in connection with the issuance or sale of Common Shares following the Distribution Date and prior to the Expiration Date, the Company (x) shall, with respect to Common Shares so issued or sold (A) pursuant to the exercise of stock options or under any employee plan or arrangement or (B) upon the exercise, conversion or exchange of other securities issued by the Company or by any Subsidiary or Affiliate or Associate of the Company prior to the Distribution Date and (y) may, in any other case, if deemed necessary or appropriate by the Board, issue Right Certificates representing the appropriate number of Rights in connection with such issuance or sale.

(d) Certificates issued for Common Shares after the Record Date but prior to the earlier of the Distribution Date or the Expiration Date shall have impressed on, printed on, written on or otherwise affixed to them a legend in substantially the following form:

This certificate also evidences and entitles the holder hereof to certain rights as set forth in an Agreement between ASA Gold and Precious Metals Limited and Computershare Trust Company, N.A., as Rights Agent, dated as of April 26, 2024, as it may be amended from time to time (the "Agreement"), the terms of which are hereby incorporated herein by reference and a copy of which is on file at the principal executive offices of ASA Gold and Precious Metals Limited. Under certain circumstances, as set forth in the Agreement, such Rights (as defined in the Agreement) will be evidenced by separate certificates and will no longer be evidenced by this certificate. ASA Gold and Precious Metals Limited will mail to the holder of record of this certificate a copy of the Agreement without charge after receipt of a written request therefor. As set forth in the Agreement, Rights Beneficially Owned by any Person (as defined in the Agreement) who becomes an Acquiring Person (as defined in the Agreement) become null and void. The Rights shall not be exercisable, and shall be void, so long as held by a holder in any jurisdiction where the requisite qualification to the issuance to such holder, or the exercise by such holder, of the Rights in such jurisdiction shall not have been obtained or be obtainable.

In the case of the initial transaction statement or subsequent periodic statements with respect to uncertificated Common Shares, such statements shall bear a legend in substantially the following form:

The registration in the share register of ASA Gold and Precious Metals Limited of the Common Shares to which this statement relates also evidences and entitles the registered holder of such shares to certain rights as set forth in an Agreement between ASA Gold and Precious Metals Limited and Computershare Trust Company, N.A., as Rights Agent, dated as of April 26, 2024, as it may be amended from time to time (the "Agreement"), the terms of which are hereby incorporated herein by reference and a copy of which is on file at the principal executive offices of ASA Gold and Precious Metals Limited. Under certain circumstances, as set forth in the Agreement, such Rights (as defined in the Agreement) will be evidenced by separate certificates and will no longer be evidenced by such registration. ASA Gold and Precious Metals Limited will mail to the registered holder of such shares a copy of the Agreement without charge after receipt of a written request therefor. As set forth in the Agreement, Rights Beneficially Owned by any Person (as defined in the Agreement) who becomes an Acquiring Person (as defined in the Agreement) become null and void. The Rights shall not be exercisable, and shall be void, so long as held by a holder in any jurisdiction where the requisite qualification to the issuance to such holder, or the exercise by such holder, of the Rights in such jurisdiction shall not have been obtained or be obtainable.

With respect to such certificates and transaction statements containing the applicable foregoing legend, until the Distribution Date, the Rights associated with the Common Shares of the Company represented by such certificates or registrations in the share register shall be evidenced by such certificates or registrations alone, and the surrender for transfer of any such certificate or registration of transfer of ownership of such uncertificated Common Shares of the Company shall also constitute the transfer of the Rights associated with the Common Shares of the Company represented thereby. In the event that the Company purchases or acquires any Common Shares of the Company after the Record Date but prior to the Distribution Date, any Rights associated with such Common Shares of the Company shall be deemed cancelled and retired so that the Company shall not be entitled to exercise any Rights associated with the Common Shares of the Company which are no longer outstanding. Notwithstanding this Section 3(d), the omission of a legend shall not affect the enforceability of any part of this Agreement or the rights of any holder of the Rights.

#### Section 4. Form of Right Certificates.

(a) The Right Certificates (and the forms of election to purchase Common Shares and of assignment to be printed on the reverse thereof), when, as and if issued, shall each be substantially the same as Exhibit A hereto, and may have such marks of identification or designation and such legends, summaries or endorsements printed thereon as the Company may deem appropriate (but which do not affect the rights, duties or responsibilities of the Rights Agent) and as are not inconsistent with the provisions of this Agreement, or as may be required to comply with any applicable law or with any applicable rule or regulation made pursuant thereto or with any applicable rule or regulation of any stock exchange or the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, or to conform to usage. Subject to the provisions of Section 11 and Section 22 hereof, the Right Certificates evidencing the Rights, whenever issued, on their face shall entitle the holders thereof to purchase such number of Common Shares as shall be set forth therein at the price per Common Share set forth therein (the "Purchase Price"), but the number of such Common Shares shall be subject to adjustment as provided herein.

(b) Any Right Certificate representing Rights beneficially owned by: (i) an Acquiring Person or any Associate or Affiliate of an Acquiring Person, (ii) a transferee of an Acquiring Person (or of any such Associate or Affiliate) who becomes a transferee after the Acquiring Person becomes such, or (iii) a transferee of an Acquiring Person (or of any such Associate or Affiliate) who becomes a transferee prior to or concurrently with the Acquiring Person becoming such and receives such Rights pursuant to either (A) a transfer (whether or not for consideration) from the Acquiring Person to holders of equity interests in such Acquiring Person or to any Person with whom such Acquiring Person has any continuing agreement, arrangement or understanding regarding the transferred Rights or (B) a transfer which the Board determines is part of an agreement, plan, arrangement or understanding which has as a primary purpose or effect avoidance of Section 7(e) hereof, and any Right Certificate issued pursuant to Section 6 or Section 11 hereof upon transfer, exchange, replacement or adjustment of any other Right Certificate referred to in this sentence, shall contain (to the extent feasible) a legend in substantially the following form:

The Rights represented by this Right Certificate are or were beneficially owned by a Person who was or became an Acquiring Person or an Affiliate or Associate of an Acquiring Person (as such terms are defined in the Rights Agreement). Accordingly, this Right Certificate and the Rights represented hereby may be or may become null and void in the circumstances specified in Section 7(e) of such Agreement.

The failure to print the foregoing legend on any such Right Certificate or any defect therein shall not affect in any manner whatsoever the application or interpretation of the provisions of Section 7(e) hereof. The Company shall give written notice to the Rights Agent promptly after the Company becomes aware of the existence and identity of any Acquiring Person or any Associate or Affiliate thereof.

Section 5. Countersignature and Registration. The Right Certificates shall be executed on behalf of the Company by its Chairman of the Board, its Chief Executive Officer, its Chief Operating Officer, its President, or any of its Vice Presidents, either manually or by facsimile signature or electronic, shall have affixed thereto the Company's seal or a facsimile or electronic copy thereof, and shall be attested by the Secretary or an Assistant Secretary of the Company, either manually or by facsimile signature. The Right Certificates shall be countersigned, either manually or by facsimile signature, by the Rights Agent and shall not be valid for any purpose unless countersigned. In case any officer of the Company who shall have signed any of the Right Certificates shall cease to be such officer of the Company before countersignature by the Rights Agent and issuance and delivery by the Company, such Right Certificates, nevertheless, may be countersigned by the Rights Agent and issued and delivered by the Company with the same force and effect as though the individual who signed such Right Certificates had not ceased to be such officer of the Company; and any Right Certificate may be signed on behalf of the Company by any individual who, at the actual date of the execution of such Right Certificate, shall be a proper officer of the Company to sign such Right Certificate, although at the date of the execution of this Agreement any such individual was not such an officer.

Following the Distribution Date, the Rights Agent will keep or cause to be kept, at an office or offices designated for such purpose, books for registration and transfer of the Right Certificates issued hereunder. Such books shall show the names and addresses of the respective holders of the Right Certificates, the number of Rights evidenced on its face by each of the Right Certificates and the date of each of the Right Certificates.

Section 6. Transfer, Split Up, Combination and Exchange of Right Certificates; Mutilated, Destroyed, Lost or Stolen Right Certificates. Subject to the provisions of Section 4(b), Section 7(e), and Section 14 hereof, at any time after the Close of Business on the Distribution Date and at or prior to the Close of Business on the Expiration Date, any Right Certificate or Right Certificates (other than Right Certificates representing Rights that have become null and void pursuant to Section 11(a)(ii) hereof or that have been exchanged pursuant to Section 24 hereof) may be transferred, split up, combined or exchanged for another Right Certificate or Right Certificates entitling the registered holder to purchase a like number of Common Shares as the Right Certificate or Right Certificates surrendered then entitled such holder to purchase. Any registered holder desiring to transfer, split up, combine or exchange any Right Certificate or Right Certificates shall make such request in writing delivered to the Rights Agent, and shall surrender the Right Certificate or Right Certificates to be transferred, split up, combined or exchanged at the office or offices of the Rights Agent designated for such purpose accompanied by a signature guarantee from an eligible guarantor institution participating in a signature guarantee program approved by the Securities Transfer Association (a "Signature Guarantee") and such other documentation as the Rights Agent may reasonably request. The Right Certificates are transferable only on the registry books of the Rights Agent. Neither the Rights Agent nor the Company shall be obligated to take any action whatsoever with respect to the transfer, split up, combination or exchange of any Right Certificate surrendered for transfer until the registered holder has (i) properly completed and duly executed the certificate contained in the form of assignment on the reverse side of such Rights Certificate accompanied by a Signature Guarantee, (ii) provided such additional evidence of the identity of the Beneficial Owner (or former Beneficial Owner) or Affiliates or Associates thereof and the Rights evidenced thereby as the Company or the Rights Agent shall reasonably request and (iii) paid a sum sufficient to cover any tax or charge that might be imposed on connection with such transfer, split up, combination or exchange of any Rights Certificate or Certificates as required by Section 9(e) hereof. Thereupon the Rights Agent, subject to the provisions of this Agreement, shall countersign (manually or by facsimile or electronic signature) and deliver to the Person entitled thereto a Right Certificate or Right Certificates, as the case may be, as so requested. The Company may require payment of a sum sufficient to cover any tax or charge that may be imposed in connection with any transfer, split up, combination or exchange of Right Certificates. If and to the extent the Company does require payment of any such taxes or charges, the Company shall give the Rights Agent prompt written notice thereof and the Rights Agent shall not deliver any Right Certificate unless and until it is satisfied that all such payments have been made, and the Rights Agent shall forward any such sum collected by it to the Company or to such Persons as the Company may specify by written notice. The Rights Agent shall have no duty or obligation under any Section of this Agreement which requires the payment of taxes or charges unless and until it is satisfied that all such taxes and/or charges have been paid.

Subject to the provisions of this Agreement, at any time after the Distribution Date and prior to but not including the Expiration Date, upon receipt by the Company and the Rights Agent of evidence reasonably satisfactory to them (including surety bond) of the loss, theft, destruction or mutilation of a Right Certificate, and, in case of loss, theft or destruction, of indemnity or security satisfactory to them, and, at the Company's or the Rights Agent's request, reimbursement to the Company and the Rights Agent of all reasonable expenses incidental thereto, and upon surrender to the Rights Agent and cancellation of the Right Certificate if mutilated, the Company will make and deliver a new Right Certificate of like tenor to the Rights Agent for countersignature and delivery to the registered holder in lieu of the Right Certificate so lost, stolen, destroyed or mutilated.



Notwithstanding any other provisions hereof, the Company and the Rights Agent may amend this Agreement to provide for uncertificated Rights in addition to or in place of Rights evidenced by Right Certificates, to the extent permitted by applicable law.

Section 7. Exercise of Rights; Purchase Price; Expiration Date of Rights.

(a) The registered holder of any Right Certificate may exercise the Rights evidenced thereby (except as otherwise provided herein, including Section 7(e), Section 9(c), Section 11(a) and Section 23), in whole or in part, at any time after the Distribution Date, upon surrender of the Right Certificate, with the form of election to purchase on the reverse side thereof properly completed and duly executed, to the Rights Agent at the office or offices of the Rights Agent designated for such purpose, accompanied by a Signature Guarantee and such other documentation as the Rights Agent may reasonably request, together with payment of the Purchase Price for each Common Share as to which the Rights are exercised, at or prior to but not including the earliest of (i) the Final Expiration Date, (ii) the date on which all of the Rights are redeemed as provided in Section 23 hereof (the "Redemption Date"), (iii) the date on which the Rights are exchanged as provided in Section 24 hereof, or (iv) the consummation of a transaction contemplated by Section 13(e) hereof (the earliest of (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) being herein referred to as the "Expiration Date"). Except for those provisions herein which expressly survive the termination of this Agreement, this Agreement shall terminate at such time as the Rights are no longer exercisable hereunder.

(b) The Purchase Price for each Common Share purchasable pursuant to the exercise of a Right shall be \$1.00, and shall be payable in lawful money of the United States of America in accordance with Section 7(c) below.

(c) Except as provided in Section 7(e), upon receipt of a Right Certificate representing exercisable Rights, with the form of election to purchase duly executed, accompanied by payment of the Purchase Price for the shares to be purchased and an amount equal to any applicable tax or charge required to be paid by the holder of such Right Certificate, the Rights Agent shall thereupon promptly (i) (A) requisition from any transfer agent of the Common Shares certificates for the number of Common Shares so elected to be purchased or, in the case of uncertificated Common Shares, requisition from any transfer agent for such Common Shares a notice setting forth such number of Common Shares to be purchased for which registration will be made in the Company's share register and the Company hereby irrevocably authorizes any such transfer agent to comply with all such requests or (B) if the Company, in its sole discretion, shall have elected to deposit the Common Shares issuable upon exercise of the Rights hereunder into a depository, requisition from the depository agent depository receipts representing such number of Common Shares as are to be purchased (in which case certificates for the Common Shares represented by such receipts shall be deposited by the transfer agent of the Common Shares with such depository agent) and the Company hereby directs such depository agent to comply with such request; (ii) when necessary to comply with this Agreement, requisition from the Company the amount of cash to be paid in lieu of issuance of fractional shares in accordance with Section 14 hereof; (iii) promptly after receipt of such certificates or depository receipts (or confirmation or written notice that an entry has been made in the book entry account system of the transfer agent), as the case may be, cause the same to be delivered to or upon the order of the registered holder of such Right Certificate, registered in such name or names as may be designated by such holder; and (iv) when necessary to comply with this Agreement, after receipt, promptly deliver the cash to or upon the order of the registered holder of such Right Certificate. The payment of the Purchase Price may be made in cash or by certified bank check or money order payable to the order of the Company. In the event that the Company is obligated to issue other securities (including Common Shares) of the Company, pay cash and/or distribute other property pursuant to Section 11(a) hereof, the Company will make all arrangements necessary so that such other securities, cash and/or other property are available for distribution by the Rights Agent, if and when appropriate. The Company reserves the right to require prior to the occurrence of a Triggering Event that, upon any exercise of Rights, a number of Rights be exercised so that only whole Common Shares would be issued.



(d) In case the registered holder of any Right Certificate shall exercise less than all the Rights evidenced thereby, a new Right Certificate evidencing Rights equivalent to the Rights remaining unexercised shall be issued by the Rights Agent to the registered holder of such Right Certificate or to such holder's duly authorized assigns, subject to the provisions of Section 14 hereof.

(e) Notwithstanding anything in this Agreement to the contrary, from and after the first occurrence of a Triggering Event, any Rights beneficially owned by or transferred to (i) an Acquiring Person or an Associate or Affiliate of an Acquiring Person, other than any such Person that the Board of Directors in good faith determines was not involved in and did not cause or facilitate, directly or indirectly, such Triggering Event, (ii) a transferee of an Acquiring Person (or of any such Associate or Affiliate) who becomes a transferee after the Acquiring Person becomes such, or (iii) a transferee of an Acquiring Person (or of any such Associate or Affiliate) who becomes a transferee prior to or concurrently with the Acquiring Person becoming such and receives such Rights pursuant to either (A) a transfer (whether or not for consideration) from the Acquiring Person to holders of equity interests in such Acquiring Person or to any Person with whom the Acquiring Person has any continuing agreement, arrangement or understanding (whether or not in writing) regarding the transferred Rights or (B) a transfer which the Board determines is part of an agreement, arrangement or understanding which has as a primary purpose or effect the avoidance of this Section 7(e), shall become null and void without any further action and no holder of such Rights shall have any rights whatsoever with respect to such Rights, whether under any provision of this Agreement or otherwise, and such Rights shall not be transferable. The Company shall use all reasonable efforts to insure that the provisions of this Section 7(e) and Section 4(b) hereof are complied with, but shall have no liability to any holder of Right Certificates or other Person as a result of its failure to make any determinations with respect to an Acquiring Person or its Affiliates, Associates or transferees hereunder.

(f) Notwithstanding anything in this Agreement or any Right Certificates to the contrary, neither the Rights Agent nor the Company shall be obligated to undertake any action with respect to a registered holder of any Right Certificates or other securities upon the occurrence of any purported exercise as set forth in this Section 7 unless such registered holder shall have (i) properly completed and duly executed the certificate contained in the form of election to purchase set forth on the reverse side of the Right Certificate surrendered for such exercise and (ii) provided such additional evidence of the identity of the Beneficial Owner (or former Beneficial Owner) or Affiliates or Associates thereof, and the Rights evidenced thereby and of the Affiliates and Associates of such Beneficial Owners (or former Beneficial Owner) as the Company or the Rights Agent shall reasonably request.

Section 8. Cancellation and Destruction of Right Certificates. All Right Certificates surrendered for the purpose of exercise, transfer, split up, combination, redemption or exchange shall, if surrendered to the Company or to any of its agents, be delivered to the Rights Agent for cancellation or in cancelled form, or, if surrendered to the Rights Agent, shall be cancelled by it, and no Right Certificates shall be issued in lieu thereof except as expressly permitted by any of the provisions of this Agreement. The Company shall deliver to the Rights Agent for cancellation and retirement, and the Rights Agent shall so cancel and retire, any other Right Certificate purchased or acquired by the Company otherwise than upon the exercise thereof. At the expense of the Company, the Rights Agent shall deliver all cancelled Right Certificates to the Company, or shall, at the written request of the Company, destroy or cause to be destroyed such cancelled Right Certificates, and, in such case, shall deliver a certificate of destruction thereof to the Company.

Section 9. Reservation and Availability of Common Shares.

(a) The Company covenants and agrees that, from and after the Distribution Date, it will keep available a sufficient number of its authorized and unissued Common Shares to permit the exercise in full of all outstanding Rights in accordance with Section 7 hereof; provided, however, that the Company shall not be required to keep available Common Shares sufficient to permit the exercise in full of all outstanding Rights pursuant to the adjustments set forth in Sections 11(a) unless, and only to the extent that, the Rights become exercisable pursuant to such adjustments.

(b) The Company covenants and agrees that it will take all such action as may be necessary to ensure that all Common Shares delivered upon exercise of Rights shall, at the time of delivery of the certificates for such Common Shares (subject to payment of the Purchase Price), be duly and validly authorized and issued and fully paid and nonassessable shares in accordance with applicable law. The Company further covenants and agrees that it will pay when due and payable any and all federal and state taxes and charges which may be payable in respect of the issuance or delivery of the Right Certificates or of any Common Shares (or, if such securities are uncertificated, the registration of such securities in the Company's share register) upon the exercise of Rights. The Company shall not, however, be required to pay any tax or charge which may be payable in respect of any transfer or delivery of Right Certificates to a Person other than, or the issuance or delivery of certificates or depositary receipts for the Common Shares in a name other than that of, the registered holder of the Right Certificate evidencing Rights surrendered for exercise or to issue or to deliver any certificates or depositary receipts for Common Shares upon the exercise of any Rights until any such tax or charge shall have been paid (any such tax or charge being payable by the holder of such Right Certificate at the time of surrender) or until it has been established to the Company's or the Rights Agent's satisfaction that no such tax or charge is due.

(c) The Company shall use its commercially reasonable efforts to (i) file, as soon as practicable following the earliest date after the first occurrence of a Section 11(a)(ii) Event on which the consideration to be delivered by the Company upon exercise of the Rights has been determined in accordance with Section 11(a)(iii) hereof, a registration statement under the Act, with respect to the securities purchasable upon exercise of the Rights on an appropriate form, (ii) cause such registration statement to become effective as soon as practicable after such filing, and (iii) cause such registration statement to remain effective (with a prospectus at all times meeting the requirements of the Act) until the earlier of (A) the date as of which the Rights are no longer exercisable for such securities, and (B) the Expiration Date. The Company will also take such action as may be appropriate under, or to ensure compliance with, the securities or “blue sky” laws of the various states in connection with the exercisability of the Rights. The Company may temporarily suspend, for a period of time not to exceed one hundred and twenty (120) days after the date set forth in clause (i) of the first sentence of this Section 9(c), the exercisability of the Rights in order to prepare and file such registration statement and permit it to become effective. In addition, if the Company shall determine that the Securities Act requires an effective registration statement under the Securities Act following the Distribution Date, the Company may temporarily suspend the exercisability of the Rights until such time as such a registration statement has been declared effective. Upon any such suspension, the Company shall issue a public announcement stating that the exercisability of the Rights has been temporarily suspended, as well as a public announcement at such time as the suspension is no longer in effect. In addition, if the Company shall determine that a registration statement is required following the Distribution Date, the Company may temporarily suspend the exercisability of the Rights until such time as a registration statement has been declared effective. Notwithstanding any provision of this Agreement to the contrary, the Rights shall not be exercisable in any jurisdiction if the requisite qualification in such jurisdiction shall not have been obtained, the exercise thereof shall not be permitted under applicable law or a registration statement shall not have been declared effective.

Section 10. Common Shares Record Date. Each Person in whose name any certificate for Common Shares is issued upon the exercise of Rights shall for all purposes be deemed to have become the holder of record of the Common Shares represented thereby on, and such certificate shall be dated, the date upon which the Right Certificate evidencing such Rights was duly surrendered and payment of the Purchase Price (and any applicable taxes or charges) was made; provided, however, that, if the date of such surrender and payment is a date upon which the Common Share transfer books of the Company are closed, such Person shall be deemed to have become the record holder of such shares on, and such certificate shall be dated, the next succeeding Business Day on which the Common Share transfer books of the Company are open. Prior to the exercise of the Rights evidenced thereby, the holder of a Right Certificate shall not be entitled to any rights of a holder of Common Shares for which the Rights shall be exercisable, including, without limitation, the right to vote, to receive dividends or other distributions or to exercise any preemptive rights, and shall not be entitled to receive any notice of any proceedings of the Company, except as provided herein.

Section 11. Adjustment of Number of Shares or Number of Rights. The number of Common Shares covered by each Right and the number of Rights outstanding are subject to adjustment from time to time as provided in this Section 11.

(a) (i) In the event the Company shall at any time after the date of this Agreement (A) declare or pay any dividend on the Common Shares payable in Common Shares, (B) subdivide or split the outstanding Common Shares into a greater number of shares, (C) combine or consolidate the outstanding Common Shares into a smaller number of Common Shares or effect a reverse split of the outstanding Common Shares or (D) issue any shares of its capital stock in a reclassification of the Common Shares (including any such reclassification in connection with a share exchange, consolidation or merger in which the Company is the continuing or surviving corporation), except as otherwise provided herein, including this Section 11(a) and Section 7(e) hereof, the Rights in effect at the time of the record date for such dividend or of the effective date of such subdivision, split, combination, consolidation, or reclassification, and the number and kind of shares of capital stock issuable on such date, shall be proportionately adjusted so that the holder of any Right exercised after such time shall be entitled to receive the aggregate number and kind of shares of capital stock which, if such Right had been exercised immediately prior to such date and at a time when the Common Share transfer books of the Company were open, such holder would have owned upon such exercise and been entitled to receive by virtue of such dividend, subdivision, split, combination, consolidation, or reclassification; provided, however, that in no event shall the consideration to be paid upon the exercise of one Right be less than the aggregate par value of the shares of capital stock of the Company issuable upon exercise of one Right. If an event occurs which would require an adjustment under both this Section 11(a)(i) and Section 11(a)(ii) hereof, the adjustment provided for in this Section 11(a)(i) shall be in addition to, and shall be made prior to, any adjustment required pursuant to Section 11(a)(ii) hereof.

(ii) In the event any Person (other than the Company, any Subsidiary of the Company, any employee benefit plan or compensation arrangement of the Company or of any Subsidiary of the Company, or any Person or entity organized, appointed or established by the Company for or pursuant to the terms of any such plan or arrangement), alone or together with its Affiliates and Associates at any time after the Effective Date becomes an Acquiring Person, unless the event causing such Person to become an Acquiring Person is a transaction set forth in Section 13(a) hereof then, subject to Sections 23(a) and 24, and except as otherwise provided below and in Section 7(e), promptly following the occurrence of any event described above, proper provision shall be made so that each holder of a Right shall thereafter have a right to receive, upon exercise thereof at a price equal to the then current Purchase Price multiplied by the number of Common Shares for which a Right is then exercisable, in accordance with the terms of this Agreement, one Common Share of the Company (such number of shares, the "Adjustment Shares"); provided, however, that the number of Adjustment Shares shall be further adjusted as appropriate to reflect any stock split, stock dividend or similar transaction, or as provided in this Agreement to reflect any other events, occurring after the date of such first occurrence; and provided, further, that if the transaction that would otherwise give rise to the foregoing adjustment is also subject to the provisions of Section 13, then only the provisions of Section 13 shall apply and no adjustment shall be made pursuant to this Section 11(a)(ii). In the event that any Person shall become an Acquiring Person and the Rights shall then be outstanding, the Company shall not take any action which would eliminate or diminish the benefits intended to be afforded by the Rights.

From and after the occurrence of such event, any Rights that are or were acquired or Beneficially Owned by any Acquiring Person (or any Associate or Affiliate of such Acquiring Person) shall be null and void without any further action, and any holder of such Rights shall thereafter have no right to exercise such Rights under any provision of this Agreement or otherwise. Neither the Company nor the Rights Agent shall have liability to any holder of Right Certificates or other Person as a result of the Company's failure to make any determinations with respect to an Acquiring Person or its Affiliates, Associates or transferees hereunder. No Right Certificate shall be issued pursuant to Section 3 hereof that represents Rights Beneficially Owned by an Acquiring Person whose Rights would be null and void pursuant to the preceding sentence or any Associate or Affiliate thereof; no Right Certificate shall be issued at any time upon the transfer of any Rights to an Acquiring Person whose Rights would be null and void pursuant to the preceding sentence or any Associate or Affiliate thereof or to any nominee of such Acquiring Person, Associate or Affiliate or with respect to any Common Shares otherwise deemed to be Beneficially Owned by any of the foregoing; and any Right Certificate delivered to the Rights Agent for transfer to an Acquiring Person or other Person whose Rights would be null and void pursuant to the preceding sentence shall be cancelled. The Company shall give the Rights Agent written notice of the identity of any Acquiring Person, Associate or Affiliate known to it, or the nominee of any of the foregoing, and the Rights Agent may rely on such notice in carrying out its duties under this Agreement and shall be deemed not to have any knowledge of the identity of any such Acquiring Person, Associate or Affiliate, or the nominee of any of the foregoing unless and until it shall have received such notice.

(iii) In the event that the number of Common Shares of the Company which are authorized by the Company's charter but not outstanding or required to be available for issuance for purposes other than upon exercise of the Rights is not sufficient to permit the exercise in full of the Rights in accordance with Section 11(a)(ii) and the Rights shall become so exercisable, the Company shall take all such action as may be necessary to authorize additional Common Shares for issuance upon exercise of the Rights. In the event the Company shall, after good faith effort, be unable to take all such action as may be necessary to authorize such additional Common Shares, to the extent permitted by applicable laws, each Right shall thereafter represent the right to receive, upon exercise thereof at the Purchase Price, a number of Common Shares of the Company (up to the maximum number of shares which may be permissibly issued) equal to the number of Adjustment Shares. In the event the number of Common Shares which are authorized by the Company's charter but not outstanding or required to be available for issuance for purposes other than upon exercise of the Rights is insufficient to permit the exercise in full of the Rights in accordance with the prior sentence and the Rights shall become so exercisable, to the extent permitted by applicable law, the Company shall: (A) determine the value of the Adjustment Shares issuable upon the exercise of a Right (the "Current Value") and that value shall be conclusive for all purposes; and (B) with respect to each Right, upon exercise of such Right, issue Common Shares to the extent available for the exercise in full of such Right and, to the extent Common Shares are not so available, make adequate provision to substitute for

the Adjustment Shares not received upon exercise of such Right: (1) other equity securities of the Company (including, without limitation, shares having the same rights, privileges and preferences as the Common Shares, or units of shares of preferred stock, which the Board has deemed to have essentially the same value or economic rights as Common Shares) (such equity securities, the “Equivalent Common Shares”), (2) debt securities of the Company, (3) other assets, (4) cash, or (5) any combination of the foregoing determined by the Board, having a value which, when added to the value of the number of the Common Shares actually issued upon exercise of such Right, shall have an aggregate value equal to the Current Value, where such aggregate value has been determined by the Board based upon the advice of an investment banking firm selected by the Board; provided, however, if the Company shall not have made adequate provision to deliver value pursuant to clause (B) above within thirty (30) days following the later of (x) the first occurrence of a Section 11(a)(ii) Event and (y) the date on which the Company’s right of redemption pursuant to Section 23(a) expires (the later of (x) and (y) being referred to herein as the “Section 11(a)(ii) Trigger Date”), then the Company shall be obligated to deliver, upon the surrender for exercise of a Right and without requiring payment of the Purchase Price, Common Shares (to the extent available) or Equivalent Common Shares and then, if necessary, cash, debt securities or other assets (in that order) which shares, cash, debt securities and/or other assets have an aggregate value equal to the Spread. For purposes of the preceding sentence, the term “Spread” shall mean the excess of (i) the Current Value over (ii) the Purchase Price. If the Board determines in good faith that it is likely that sufficient additional Common Shares or Equivalent Common Shares could be authorized for issuance upon exercise in full of the Rights, the thirty (30) day period set forth above may be extended to the extent necessary, but not more than ninety (90) days after the Section 11(a)(ii) Trigger Date, in order that the Company may seek shareholder approval for the authorization of such additional shares (such thirty (30) day period, as it may be extended, is herein called the “Substitution Period”). To the extent that action is to be taken pursuant to this Section 11(a)(iii), the Company (1) shall provide, subject to Section 7(e) hereof, that such action shall apply uniformly to all outstanding and exercisable Rights, and (2) may suspend the exercisability of the Rights until the expiration of the Substitution Period in order to seek such shareholder approval for such authorization of additional shares and/or to decide the appropriate form of distribution to be made pursuant to the foregoing provisions of this Section 11(a)(iii) and, if necessary, to determine the value thereof. In the event of any such suspension, the Company shall issue a public announcement stating that the exercisability of the Rights has been temporarily suspended, as well as a public announcement at such time as the suspension is no longer in effect. For purposes of this Section 11(a)(iii), the value of each Adjustment Share shall be the Current Per Share Market Price of the Common Shares on the Section 11(a)(ii) Trigger Date, and any Equivalent Common Shares shall be deemed to have the same value as the Common Shares on such date. The Board may, but shall not be required to, establish procedures to allocate the right to receive Common Shares upon the exercise of the Rights among holders of Rights pursuant to this Section 11(a)(iii). Notwithstanding the foregoing, in no event shall the Company be required to issue any securities (including Common Shares or Equivalent Common Shares), other assets or cash upon exercise of a Right, if, in the judgment of the Board, doing so would violate the terms of any material agreement or instrument of the Company or any of its Subsidiaries. Any such required issuance shall be deferred until such time as such issuance by the Company becomes legally permitted under the terms of any such agreement or instrument.

(b) All calculations under this Section 11 shall be made to the nearest cent or to the nearest one ten-thousandth of a Common Share or of any other share or security as the case may be. Notwithstanding the first sentence of this Section 11(e), any adjustment required by this Section 11 shall be made no later than the earlier of (i) one hundred twenty days from the date of the transaction which requires such adjustment or (ii) the Expiration Date.

(c) If, as a result of an adjustment made pursuant to Section 11(a)(ii) or (iii) or Section 13(a) hereof, the holder of any Right thereafter exercised shall become entitled to receive any shares of capital stock of the Company other than Common Shares, thereafter the number of such other shares so receivable upon exercise of any Right shall be subject to adjustment from time to time in a manner and on terms as nearly equivalent as practicable to the provisions with respect to the Common Shares contained in this Section 11 and the provisions of Sections 7, 9, 10, 13 and 14 hereof with respect to the Common Shares shall apply on like terms to any such other shares.

(d) Irrespective of any adjustment or change in the number of Common Shares issuable upon the exercise of the Rights, the Right Certificates theretofore and thereafter issued may continue to express the Purchase Price and the number of Common Shares which were expressed in the initial Right Certificates issued hereunder.

(e) In any case in which this Section 11 shall require that an adjustment to the number of Rights or number of Common Shares issuable upon exercise of a Right be made effective as of a record date for a specified event, the Company may elect to defer until the occurrence of such event the issuing to the holder of any Right exercised after such record date of the Common Shares and other capital stock or securities of the Company, if any, issuable upon such exercise over and above the Common Shares and other capital stock or securities of the Company, if any, issuable upon such exercise; provided, however, that the Company shall deliver to such holder a due bill or other appropriate instrument evidencing such holder's right to receive such additional shares upon the occurrence of the event requiring such adjustment.

(f) The Company covenants and agrees that it shall not, at any time after the Distribution Date, (i) consolidate with any other Person (other than a Subsidiary of the Company), (ii) merge with or into any other Person (other than a Subsidiary of the Company), (iii) effect a share exchange with any other Person (other than a Subsidiary of the Company) or (iv) sell or transfer (or permit any Subsidiary to sell or transfer), in one transaction, or a series of related transactions, assets, cash flow or earning power aggregating more than 50% of the assets, cash flow or earning power of the Company and its Subsidiaries (taken as a whole) to any other Person or Persons (other than the Company and/or any of its Subsidiaries), if (x) at the time of or immediately after such consolidation, merger, share exchange, sale or transfer there are any rights, warrants or other instruments or securities outstanding or agreements in effect which would substantially diminish or otherwise eliminate the benefits intended to be afforded by the Rights or (y) prior to, simultaneously with or immediately after such consolidation, merger or sale, the shareholders of the Person who constitutes, or would constitute, the "Principal Party" for purposes of Section 13(a) hereof shall have received a distribution of Rights previously owned by such Person or any of its Affiliates and Associates. The Company shall not consummate any such consolidation, share exchange, merger, sale or transfer unless prior thereto the Company and such other Person shall have executed and delivered to the Rights Agent a supplemental agreement evidencing compliance with this Section 11(f).



(g) The Company covenants and agrees that, after the Distribution Date, it will not, except as permitted by Section 23, Section 24 or Section 27 hereof, take (or permit any Subsidiary to take) any action if at the time such action is taken it is reasonably foreseeable that such action will diminish substantially or otherwise eliminate the benefits intended to be afforded by the Rights.

Section 12. Certificate of Adjusted Number of Shares. Whenever an adjustment is made or any event affecting the Rights or their exercisability occurs as provided in Section 11 or 13 hereof, the Company shall promptly (a) prepare a certificate setting forth such adjustment or describing such event and a brief reasonably detailed statement of the facts, computations and methodology accounting for such adjustment or describing such event, (b) file with the Rights Agent and with each transfer agent for the Common Shares a copy of such certificate and (c) if such adjustment occurs at any time after the Distribution Date, mail a brief summary thereof to each registered holder of a Right Certificate (or, if prior to the Distribution Date, to each holder of record of Common Shares). The Rights Agent shall be fully protected in relying on any such certificate and on any adjustment or statement therein contained and shall have no duty or liability with respect to, and shall not be deemed to have knowledge of any adjustment or any such event unless and until it shall have received such a certificate.

Section 13. Consolidation, Merger or Sale or Transfer of Assets or Earning Power.

(a) At any time after a Person has become an Acquiring Person, in the event that, directly or indirectly (x) the Company shall effect a share exchange, consolidate with, or merge with and into, any other Person, and the Company shall not be the continuing or surviving corporation of such consolidation or merger, (y) any Person or Persons shall effect a share exchange or consolidate with, or merge with or into, the Company, and the Company shall be the continuing or surviving corporation of such consolidation, share exchange or merger and, in connection with such consolidation or merger, all or part of the Common Shares shall be changed into or exchanged for stock or other securities of any other Person (or the Company) or cash or any other property, or (z) the Company shall sell or otherwise transfer (or one or more of its Subsidiaries shall sell or otherwise transfer), in one transaction or a series of related transactions, assets, cash flow or earning power aggregating more than 50% of the assets, cash flow or earning power of the Company and its Subsidiaries (taken as a whole) to any Person (other than the Company or any wholly owned Subsidiary of the Company or any combination thereof in one or more transactions each of which complies (and all of which together comply) with Section 11(g) hereof); provided, however, that this clause (z) of Section 13(a) hereof shall not apply to the pro rata distribution by the Company of assets (including securities) of the Company or any of its Subsidiaries to all holders of Common Shares; or Persons, then, and in each such case (except as may be contemplated by Section 13(e) hereof), proper provision shall



be made so that: (i) each holder of a Right (except as otherwise provided in Section 7(e) hereof) shall thereafter have the right to receive, upon the exercise thereof at a price equal to the then current Purchase Price multiplied by the number of Common Shares for which a Right is then exercisable, in accordance with the terms of this Agreement and in lieu of Common Shares, such number of validly authorized and issued, fully paid, non-assessable and freely tradable Common Shares of the Principal Party (as such term is hereinafter defined), not subject to any liens, encumbrances, preemptive rights, rights of first refusal or other adverse claims, as shall be equal to the result obtained by multiplying the then current Purchase Price by the number of Common Shares for which a Right is then exercisable immediately prior to the first occurrence of a Section 13 Event (or, if a Section 11(a)(ii) Event has occurred prior to the first occurrence of a Section 13 Event, multiplying the number of Common Shares for which a Right was exercisable immediately prior to the first occurrence of a Section 11(a)(ii) Event by the Purchase Price in effect immediately prior to such first occurrence); provided that the Purchase Price and the number of Common Shares of the Principal Party issuable upon exercise of each Right shall be further adjusted as appropriate to reflect any stock split, stock dividend or similar transaction, or as provided in this Agreement to reflect any other events, occurring after the date of the first occurrence of a Section 13 Event; (ii) the Principal Party shall thereafter be liable for, and shall assume, by virtue of such Section 13 Event, all the obligations and duties of the Company pursuant to this Agreement; (iii) the term "Company" shall thereafter be deemed to refer to such Principal Party, it being specifically intended that the provisions of Section 11 hereof shall apply only to such Principal Party following the first occurrence of a Section 13 Event; (iv) such Principal Party shall take such steps (including, but not limited to, the reservation of a sufficient number of its Common Shares, or if there are an insufficient number of authorized Common Shares, securities with rights substantially similar to those Common Shares of the Principal Party, which have not been issued or reserved for any other purpose in order to permit the exercise in full of the Rights in accordance with this Section 13) in connection with the consummation of any such transaction as may be necessary to assure that the provisions hereof shall thereafter be applicable, as nearly as reasonably may be, in relation to its Common Shares thereafter deliverable upon the exercise of the Rights; provided, however, that, upon the subsequent occurrence of any merger, consolidation, share exchange, sale of all or substantially all assets, recapitalization, reclassification of shares, reorganization or other extraordinary transaction in respect of the Principal Party, each holder of a Right shall thereupon be entitled to receive, upon exercise of a Right and payment of the Purchase Price, the cash, shares, rights, warrants and other property which the holder would have been entitled to receive had the holder, at the time of that transaction, owned the Common Shares of the Principal Party purchasable upon the exercise of a Right, and the Principal Party shall take such steps (including, but not limited to, reservation of shares of stock) as may be necessary to permit the subsequent exercise of the Rights in accordance with the terms for such cash, shares, rights, warrants and other property; and (v) the provisions of Section 11(a)(ii) hereof shall be of no effect following the first occurrence of any Section 13 Event.

(b) "Principal Party," shall mean:

(i) in the case of any transaction described in clause (x) or (y) of the first sentence of Section 13(a): (A) the Person that is the issuer of the securities into which Common Shares of the Company are converted in such merger, consolidation or share exchange or, if there is more than one such issuer, the issuer of the Common Shares of which has the greatest market value or (B) if no securities are so issued, (x) the Person that is the other party to the merger, consolidation or share exchange and that survives said merger, consolidation or share exchange or, if there is more than one such Person, the Person the Common Shares of which has the greatest market value or (y) if the Person that is the other party to the merger, consolidation or share exchange does not survive the merger, consolidation or share exchange, the Person that does survive the merger, consolidation or share exchange (including the Company if it survives); and

(ii) in the case of any transaction described in clause (z) of the first sentence in Section 13(a), the Person that is the party receiving the greatest portion of the assets, cash flow or earning power transferred pursuant to such transaction or transactions or, if each Person that is a party to such transaction or transactions receives the same portion of the assets or earning power so transferred or if the Person receiving the greatest portion of the assets or earning power cannot be determined, whichever of those Persons as is the issuer of Common Shares having the greatest market value of shares outstanding;

provided, however, that in any such case, (1) if the Common Shares of such Person is not at such time and has not been continuously over the preceding twelve (12) month period registered under Section 12 of the Exchange Act, and such Person is a direct or indirect Subsidiary of another Person the Common Shares of which is and has been so registered, "Principal Party" shall refer to such other Person; (2) if the Common Shares of such Person is not and has not been so registered and such Person is a Subsidiary, directly or indirectly, of more than one Person, the Common Shares of two or more of which are and have been so registered, "Principal Party" shall refer to whichever of such Persons is the issuer of the Common Shares having the greatest aggregate market value; and (3) if the Common Shares of such Person is not and has not been so registered and such Person is, or is owned directly or indirectly by, a partnership or joint venture formed by two or more Persons that are not owned, directly or indirectly, by the same Person, the rules set forth in (1) and (2) above shall apply to each of the chains of ownership having an interest in such joint venture as if such party were a "Subsidiary" of both or all of such joint venturers and the Principal Parties in each such chain shall bear the obligations set forth in this Section 13 in the same ratio as their direct or indirect interests in such Person bear to the total of such interests.

(c) The Company shall not consummate any such consolidation, merger, sale or transfer unless the Principal Party shall have a sufficient number of authorized Common Shares which have not been issued or reserved for issuance to permit the exercise in full of the Rights in accordance with this Section 13 and unless prior thereto the Company and such Principal Party shall have executed and delivered to the Rights Agent a supplemental agreement providing for the Principal Party to assume and perform the terms set forth in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this Section 13 and further providing that, as soon as practicable after the date of any consolidation, merger or sale of assets mentioned in paragraph (a) of this Section 13, the Principal Party will:

(i) prepare and file a registration statement under the Act, with respect to the Rights and the securities purchasable upon exercise of the Rights on an appropriate form, and will use its best efforts to cause such registration statement to (A) become effective as soon as practicable after such filing and (B) remain effective (with a prospectus at all times meeting the requirements of the Act) until the Expiration Date;

(ii) take all such other action as may be necessary to enable the Principal Party to issue the securities purchasable upon exercise of the Rights, including but not limited to the registration or qualification of such securities under all requisite securities laws of jurisdictions of the various states and the listing of such securities on the NYSE or such other national securities exchanges and trading markets as may be necessary or appropriate;

(iii) deliver to holders of the Rights historical financial statements for the Principal Party and each of its Affiliates which comply in all respects with the requirements for registration on Form 10 under the Exchange Act; and

(iv) obtain waivers of any rights of first refusal or preemptive rights in respect of the Common Shares of the Principal Party subject to purchase upon exercise of outstanding Rights.

The provisions of this Section 13 shall similarly apply to successive mergers or consolidations or sales or other transfers. In the event that a Section 13 Event shall occur at any time after the occurrence of a Section 11(a)(ii) Event, the Rights which have not theretofore been exercised shall thereafter become exercisable in the manner described in Section 13(a).

#### Section 14. Fractional Rights and Fractional Shares.

(a) The Company shall not be required to issue fractions of Rights or to distribute Right Certificates which evidence fractional Rights. In lieu of such fractional Rights, there shall be paid to the registered holders of the Right Certificates with regard to which such fractional Rights would otherwise be issuable, an amount in cash equal to the same fraction of the current market value of a whole Right. For the purposes of this Section 14(a), the current market value of a whole Right shall be the closing price of the Rights for the Trading Day immediately prior to the date on which such fractional Rights would have been otherwise issuable. The closing price of a Right for any day shall be the last sale price, regular way, or, in case no such sale takes place on such day, the average of the closing bid and asked prices, regular way, in either case, as reported in the principal consolidated transaction reporting system with respect to securities listed or admitted to trading on the NYSE or, if the Rights are not listed or admitted to trading on the NYSE, as reported in the principal consolidated transaction reporting system with respect to securities listed on the principal national securities exchange on which the Rights are listed or admitted to trading or, if the Rights are not listed or admitted to trading on any national securities exchange, the last quoted price or, if not so quoted, the average of the high bid and low asked prices in the over-the-counter market, as reported by Nasdaq or such other system then in use or, if on any such date the Rights are not quoted by any such organization, the average of the closing bid and asked prices as furnished by a professional market maker making a market in the Rights selected by the Board. If on any such date no such market maker is making a market in the Rights, the fair value of the Rights on such date as determined in good faith by the Board shall be used.

(b) The Company shall not be required to issue fractions of Common Shares upon exercise or exchange of the Rights or to distribute certificates which evidence fractional Common Shares. In lieu of fractional Common Shares, the Company shall pay to the registered holders of Right Certificates at the time such Rights are exercised or exchanged as herein provided an amount in cash equal to the same fraction of the current market value of one Common Share. For the purposes of this Section 14(b), the current market value of a Common Share shall be the closing price of a Common Share for the Trading Day immediately prior to the date of such exercise.

(c) The holder of a Right, by the acceptance of the Right, expressly waives such holder's right to receive any fractional Rights or any fractional shares upon exercise of a Right (except as provided above).

(d) Whenever a payment for fractional Rights or fractional shares is to be made by the Rights Agent under this Agreement, the Company shall (i) promptly prepare and deliver to the Rights Agent a certificate setting forth in reasonable detail the facts related to such payment and the prices or formulas utilized in calculating such payments and (ii) provide sufficient monies to the Rights Agent in the form of fully collected funds to make such payments. The Rights Agent shall be fully protected in relying upon such a certificate and has no duty with respect to, and will not be deemed to have knowledge of, any payment for fractional Rights or fractional shares under any Section of this Agreement relating to the payment of fractional Rights or fractional shares unless and until the Rights Agent has received such a certificate and sufficient monies.

Section 15. Rights of Action. All rights of action in respect of this Agreement, excepting the rights of action given to the Rights Agent under this Agreement, are vested in the respective registered holders of the Right Certificates (and, prior to the Distribution Date, the registered holders of the Common Shares); and any registered holder of any Right Certificate (or, prior to the Distribution Date, of the Common Shares), without the consent of the Rights Agent or of the holder of any other Right Certificate (or, prior to the Distribution Date, of the Common Shares), may, in such holder's own behalf and for such holder's own benefit, enforce, and may institute and maintain any suit, action or proceeding against the Company to enforce, or otherwise act in respect of, such holder's right to exercise the Rights evidenced by such Right Certificate in the manner provided in such Right Certificate and in this Agreement. Without limiting the foregoing or any remedies available to the holders of Rights, it is specifically acknowledged that the holders of Rights would not have an adequate remedy at law for any breach of this Agreement, and will be entitled to specific performance of the obligations under, and injunctive relief against actual or threatened violations by the Company of its obligations hereunder.

Section 16. Agreement of Right Holders. Every holder of a Right, by accepting the same, consents and agrees with the Company and the Rights Agent and with every other holder of a Right that:

(a) prior to the Distribution Date, the Rights will be transferable only in connection with the transfer of the Common Shares;

(b) after the Distribution Date, the Right Certificates are transferable only on the registry books of the Rights Agent if surrendered at the office or offices of the Rights Agent designated for such purpose, duly endorsed or accompanied by a proper instrument of transfer and with the appropriate forms and certificates properly completed and duly executed, accompanied by a Signature Guarantee and such other documentation as the Rights Agent may reasonably request;

(c) the Company and the Rights Agent may deem and treat the Person in whose name the Right Certificate (or, prior to the Distribution Date, the associated Common Shares certificate or uncertificated Common Share) is registered as the absolute owner thereof and of the Rights evidenced thereby (notwithstanding any notations of ownership or writing on the Right Certificate or the associated Common Shares certificate made by anyone other than the Company or the Rights Agent) for all purposes whatsoever, and neither the Company nor the Rights Agent shall be affected by any notice to the contrary; and

(d) notwithstanding anything in this Agreement to the contrary, neither the Company nor the Rights Agent shall have any liability to any holder of a Right or other Person (without limiting any of the rights of the Rights Agent under Section 18) as a result of its inability to perform any of its obligations under this Agreement by reason of any preliminary or permanent injunction or other order, judgment, decree or ruling (whether interlocutory or final) issued by a court of competent jurisdiction or by a governmental, regulatory, self-regulatory, or administrative agency or commission, or any statute, rule, regulation or executive order promulgated or enacted by any governmental authority, prohibiting or otherwise restraining performance of such obligation; provided, however, the Company must use its best efforts to have any such order, decree, judgment or ruling lifted or otherwise overturned as soon as possible.

Section 17. Right Certificate Holder Not Deemed a Shareholder. No holder, as such, of any Right Certificate shall be entitled to vote, receive dividends or be deemed for any purpose the holder of the Common Shares or any other securities of the Company which may at any time be issuable on the exercise of the Rights represented thereby, nor shall anything contained herein or in any Right Certificate be construed to confer upon the holder of any Right Certificate, as such, any of the rights of a shareholder of the Company or any right to vote for the election of directors or upon any matter submitted to shareholders at any meeting thereof, or to give or withhold consent to any corporate action, or to receive notice of meetings or other actions affecting shareholders (except as provided in Section 25 hereof), or to receive dividends or subscription rights, or otherwise, until the Right or Rights evidenced by such Right Certificate shall have been exercised in accordance with the provisions hereof.

Section 18. Concerning the Rights Agent.

(a) (a) The Company agrees to pay to the Rights Agent compensation for all services rendered by it hereunder in accordance with a fee schedule to be mutually agreed upon and, from time to time, on demand of the Rights Agent, to reimburse the Rights Agent for all of its reasonable and documented expenses and counsel fees and disbursements and other disbursements incurred in the preparation, negotiation, execution, administration, delivery and amendment of this Agreement and the exercise and performance of its duties hereunder. The Company also agrees to indemnify the Rights Agent for, and to hold it harmless against, any loss, liability, damage, judgment, fine, penalty, claim, demand, settlement, cost or expense (including, without limitation, the reasonable fees and expenses of legal counsel) that is paid, incurred or to which it becomes subject, without gross negligence, bad faith or willful misconduct on the part of the Rights Agent (which gross negligence, bad faith, or willful misconduct must be determined by a final, non-appealable judgment of a court of competent jurisdiction) for any action taken, suffered or omitted by the Rights Agent in connection with the execution, acceptance, administration, exercise and performance of its duties under this Agreement, including the reasonable costs and expenses of defending against any claim of liability arising therefrom, directly or indirectly, or of enforcing its rights under this Agreement. The costs and expenses incurred in enforcing this right of indemnification shall be paid by the Company, to the extent that the Rights Agent is successful in so enforcing its right of indemnification.

(b) The Rights Agent shall be fully authorized and protected and shall incur no liability for or in respect of any action taken, suffered or omitted by it in connection with its acceptance and administration of this Agreement and the exercise and performance of its duties hereunder in reliance upon any Right Certificate or certificate for Common Shares or for other securities of the Company (including in the case of uncertificated securities, by notation in Book Entry accounts reflecting ownership), instrument of assignment or transfer, power of attorney, endorsement, affidavit, letter, notice, direction, consent, certificate, statement, or other paper or document believed by it in the absence of bad faith to be genuine and to be signed, executed and, where necessary, verified or acknowledged, by the proper Person or Persons, or otherwise upon the advice of counsel as set forth in Section 20 hereof. The Rights Agent shall not be deemed to have knowledge of any event of which it was supposed to receive notice thereof hereunder, and the Rights Agent shall be fully protected and shall incur no liability for failing to take action in connection therewith unless and until such notice has been given to the Rights Agent in accordance with Section 25 hereof.

(c) This Section 18 and Section 20 shall survive the termination of this Agreement, the resignation, replacement or removal of the Rights Agent and the exercise, termination and expiration of the Rights. Notwithstanding anything in this Agreement to the contrary, in no event shall the Rights Agent be liable for special, punitive, incidental, indirect or consequential loss or damage of any kind whatsoever, even if the Rights Agent has been advised of the likelihood of such loss or damage (including lost profits) and regardless of the form of the action. Notwithstanding anything in this Agreement to the contrary, any liability of the Rights Agent under this Agreement shall be limited to the amount of fees (but not including any reimbursed costs) paid by the Company to the Rights Agent during the twelve (12) months immediately preceding the event for which recovery from the Rights Agent is being sought.

Section 19. Merger or Consolidation or Change of Name of Rights Agent. Any Person into which the Rights Agent or any successor Rights Agent may be merged or with which it may effect a share exchange, be consolidated, or any Person resulting from any merger, share exchange, or consolidation to which the Rights Agent or any successor Rights Agent shall be a party, or any Person succeeding to the business of the Rights Agent or any successor Rights Agent, shall be the successor to the Rights Agent under this Agreement without the execution or filing of any paper or document or any further act on the part of any of the parties hereto; provided that such Person would be eligible for appointment as a successor Rights Agent under the provisions of Section 21 hereof. The purchase of all or substantially all of the Rights Agent's assets employed in the performance of the transfer agent activities shall be deemed a merger or consolidation for purposes of this Section 19. In case at the time such successor Rights Agent shall succeed to the agency created by this Agreement, any of the Right Certificates shall have been countersigned but not delivered, any such successor Rights Agent may adopt the countersignature of the predecessor Rights Agent and deliver such Right Certificates so countersigned; and, in case at that time any of the Right Certificates shall not have been countersigned, any successor Rights Agent may countersign such Right Certificates either in the name of the predecessor Rights Agent or in the name of the successor Rights Agent; and, in all such cases, such Right Certificates shall have the full force provided in the Right Certificates and in this Agreement.

In case at any time the name of the Rights Agent shall be changed and at such time any of the Right Certificates shall have been countersigned but not delivered, the Rights Agent may adopt the countersignature under its prior name and deliver Right Certificates so countersigned; and, in case at that time any of the Right Certificates shall not have been countersigned, the Rights Agent may countersign such Right Certificates either in its prior name or in its changed name; and, in all such cases, such Right Certificates shall have the full force provided in the Right Certificates and in this Agreement.

Section 20. Duties of Rights Agent. The Rights Agent undertakes the duties and obligations imposed by this Agreement upon the following express terms and conditions, and no implied duties or obligations shall be read into this Agreement against the Rights Agent. The Rights Agent shall perform such duties and obligations, by all of which the Company and the holders of Right Certificates, by their acceptance thereof, shall be bound:

(a) The Rights Agent may consult with legal counsel selected by it (who may be legal counsel for the Company or an employee of the Rights Agent), and the opinion or advice of such counsel shall be full and complete authorization and protection to the Rights Agent, and the Rights Agent shall incur no liability for or in respect of any action taken, suffered or omitted by it in accordance with such opinion or advice.

(b) Whenever in the performance of its duties under this Agreement the Rights Agent shall deem it necessary or desirable that any fact or matter be proved or established by the Company prior to taking or suffering or omitting to take any action hereunder, such fact or matter (unless other evidence in respect thereof be herein specifically prescribed) may be deemed to be conclusively proved and established by a certificate signed by any one of the Chairman of the Board, the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Operating Officer, the President, any Vice President, the Secretary or any Assistant Secretary of the Company and delivered to the Rights Agent; and such certificate shall be full and complete authorization and protection to the Rights Agent and the Rights Agent shall incur no liability for or in respect of any action taken, suffered or omitted to be taken by it under the provisions of this Agreement in reliance upon such certificate. The Rights Agent shall have no duty to act without such a certificate as set forth in this Section 20(b).



(c) The Rights Agent shall be liable hereunder to the Company and any other Person only for its own gross negligence, bad faith or willful misconduct (each as determined by a final, non-appealable judgment of a court of competent jurisdiction).

(d) The Rights Agent shall not be required to take notice or be deemed to have notice of any event or condition hereunder, including any event or condition that may require action by the Rights Agent and shall be fully protected and shall incur no liability for failing to take action in connection therewith unless the Rights Agent shall be specifically notified in writing of such event or condition by the Company, and all notices or other instruments required by this Agreement to be delivered to the Rights Agent must, in order to be effective, be received by the Rights Agent as specified by Section 25 hereof, and in the absence of such notice so delivered, the Rights Agent may conclusively assume no such event or condition exists.

(e) The Rights Agent shall not be liable for or by reason of any of the statements of fact or recitals contained in this Agreement or in the Right Certificates (except its countersignature thereof) or be required to verify the same, but all such statements and recitals are and shall be deemed to have been made by the Company only.

(f) The Rights Agent shall not have any liability for or be under any responsibility in respect of the validity of this Agreement or the execution and delivery hereof (except the due execution hereof by the Rights Agent) or in respect of the legality, validity or execution of any Right Certificate (except its countersignature thereof); nor shall it be liable or responsible for any breach by the Company of any covenant or failure by the Company to satisfy any condition contained in this Agreement or in any Right Certificate; nor shall it be responsible for any change in the exercisability of the Rights (including the Rights becoming null and void pursuant to Section 11(a)(ii) hereof) or any change or adjustment in the terms of the Rights (including the manner, method or amount thereof) provided for in Section 3, 11, 13, 23 or 24 hereof, or the ascertaining of the existence of facts that would require any such change or adjustment (except with respect to the exercise of Rights evidenced by Right Certificates after receipt of a certificate pursuant to Section 12 describing such change or adjustment); nor shall it by any act hereunder be deemed to make any representation or warranty as to the authorization or reservation of any Common Shares to be issued pursuant to this Agreement or any Right Certificate or as to whether any Common Shares will, when issued, be validly authorized and issued, fully paid and nonassessable.

(g) The Company agrees that it will perform, execute, acknowledge and deliver or cause to be performed, executed, acknowledged and delivered all such further and other acts, instruments and assurances as may reasonably be required by the Rights Agent for the carrying out or performing by the Rights Agent of its duties under this Agreement.

(h) The Rights Agent is hereby authorized and directed to accept instructions with respect to the performance of its duties hereunder from any person reasonably believed by the Rights Agent to be one of the Chairman of the Board, the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Operating Officer, the President, any Vice President, the Secretary or any Assistant Secretary, and to apply to such officers for advice or instructions in connection with its duties, and such advice or instructions shall provide full authorization and protection to the Rights Agent and the Rights Agent shall not be liable for and it shall incur no liability for or in respect of any action taken or suffered to be taken by it in accordance with instructions of any such officer. Any application by the Rights Agent for written instructions from the Company may, at the option of the Rights Agent, set forth in writing any action proposed to be taken, suffered or omitted to be taken by the Rights Agent under this Agreement and the date on and/or after which such action shall be taken or such omission shall be effective. The Rights Agent shall be fully authorized and protected in relying upon the most recent instructions received from any such officer, and it shall not be liable for any action taken, suffered or omitted to be taken by it in accordance with the instructions of any such officer or for any delay in acting while waiting for those instructions.



(i) The Rights Agent and any shareholder, affiliate, director, officer or employee of the Rights Agent may buy, sell or deal in any of the Rights or other securities of the Company or become pecuniarily interested in any transaction in which the Company may be interested, or contract with or lend money to the Company or otherwise act as fully and freely as though the Rights Agent were not Rights Agent under this Agreement. Nothing herein shall preclude the Rights Agent, any shareholder, affiliate, director, officer or employee of the Rights Agent from acting in any other capacity for the Company or for any other Person.

(j) The Rights Agent may execute and exercise any of the rights or powers hereby vested in it or perform any duty hereunder either itself (through its directors, officers and employees) or by or through its attorneys or agents, and the Rights Agent shall not be answerable or accountable for any act, omission, default, neglect or misconduct of any such attorneys or agents or for any loss to the Company or any other Person resulting from any such act, omission, default, neglect or misconduct, absent gross negligence, bad faith or willful misconduct in the selection and continued employment thereof (which gross negligence, bad faith or willful misconduct must be determined by a final, non-appealable judgment of a court of competent jurisdiction).

(k) If, with respect to any Right Certificate surrendered to the Rights Agent for exercise or transfer, the certificate contained in the form of assignment or the form of election to purchase set forth on the reverse thereof, as the case may be, has either not been properly completed or indicates an affirmative response to any clause thereof, the Rights Agent shall not take any further action with respect to such requested exercise or transfer without first consulting with the Company; provided, however that the Rights Agent shall not be liable for any delays arising from the failure of a holder to complete the applicable certificate contemplated by this Section 20(k).

(l) No provision of this Agreement shall require the Rights Agent to expend or risk its own funds or otherwise incur any financial liability in the performance of any of its duties hereunder (other than internal costs incurred by the Rights Agent in providing services to the Company in the ordinary course of its business as Rights Agent under the terms and conditions of this Agreement) or in the exercise of its rights if it believes that repayment of such funds or adequate indemnification against such risk or liability is not reasonably assured to it; provided, however, that the Rights Agent shall not be liable for any delays arising from the duties under this Section 20(k).

(m) The Rights Agent shall have no duty or obligation to take any action with respect to a Rights holder under this Agreement that requires the payment by such Rights holder of any tax or governmental charge unless and until the Rights Agent is satisfied that all such taxes and charges have been paid.

(n) The Rights Agent shall not be liable or responsible for any failure of the Company to comply with any of its obligations relating to any registration statement filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission or this Agreement, including obligations under applicable regulation or law.

(o) The Rights Agent shall not have any duty or responsibility in the case of the receipt of any written demand from any holder of Rights with respect to any action or default by the Company, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, any duty or responsibility to initiate or attempt to initiate any proceedings at law or otherwise or to make any demand upon the Company; provided that upon the receipt of any such demand the Rights Agent shall use efforts to provide the Company with notice thereof as soon as commercially practicable.

(p) The Rights Agent shall have no responsibility to the Company, the holders of the Rights or any other Person for interest or earnings on any moneys held by the Rights Agent pursuant to this Agreement.

(q) The Rights Agent may rely on and be fully authorized and protected in acting or failing to act upon (i) any guaranty of signature by an "eligible guarantor institution" that is a member or participant in the Securities Transfer Agents Medallion Program or other comparable "signature guarantee program" or insurance program in addition to, or in substitution for, the foregoing or (ii) any law, act, regulation or any interpretation of the same.

(r) In the event the Rights Agent believes any ambiguity or uncertainty exists hereunder or in any notice, instruction, direction, request or other communication, paper or document received by the Rights Agent hereunder, the Rights Agent shall notify the Company thereof, and the Rights Agent, may, in its sole discretion, refrain from taking any action, and shall be fully protected and shall not be liable in any way to the Company, the holder of any Right or any other Person for refraining from taking such action, unless the Rights Agent receives written instructions signed by the Company that eliminate such ambiguity or uncertainty to the satisfaction of the Rights Agent.

Section 21. Change of Rights Agent. The Rights Agent or any successor Rights Agent may resign and be discharged from its duties under this Agreement upon 30 days' notice in writing to the Company and, in the event that the Rights Agent or one of its Affiliates is not also the transfer agent for the Company, to each transfer agent of the Common Shares known to the Rights Agent by registered or certified mail. In the event the transfer agency relationship in effect between the Company and the Rights Agent terminates, the Rights Agent will be deemed to have resigned automatically and be discharged from its duties under this Agreement as of the effective date of such termination. The Company may remove the Rights Agent or any successor Rights Agent (with or without cause) upon 30 days' notice in writing, mailed to the Rights Agent or successor Rights Agent, as the case may be, and to each transfer agent of the Common Shares by registered or certified mail, and to the holders of the Right Certificates by first-class mail. If the Rights Agent shall resign or be removed or shall otherwise become incapable of acting, the Company shall appoint a successor to the Rights Agent. If the Company shall fail to make such appointment within a period of 30 days after giving notice of such removal or after it has been notified in writing of such resignation or incapacity by the resigning or incapacitated Rights Agent or by the holder of a Right Certificate (which holder shall, with such notice, submit such holder's Right Certificate for inspection by the Company), then the registered holder of any Right Certificate may apply, at the expense of the Company, to any court of competent jurisdiction for the appointment of a new Rights Agent. Any successor Rights Agent, whether appointed by the Company or by such a court, shall be either (a) a Person organized and doing business under the laws of the United States or any state of the United States so long as such entity is authorized to do business as a banking institution in such state, in good standing, which is authorized under such laws to exercise corporate trust or stock transfer powers and is subject to supervision or examination by federal or state authority and which has at the time of its appointment as Rights Agent a combined capital and surplus of at least \$50 million or (b) an Affiliate or direct or indirect wholly-owned Subsidiary of such Person or its wholly-owning parent. After appointment, the successor Rights Agent shall be vested with the same powers, rights, duties and responsibilities as if it had been originally named as Rights Agent without further act or deed; but the predecessor Rights Agent shall deliver and transfer to the successor Rights Agent any property at the time held by it hereunder, and execute and deliver any conveyance, act or deed necessary for the purpose, but such predecessor Rights Agent shall not be required to make any additional expenditure or assume any additional liability in connection with the foregoing. Not later than the effective date of any such appointment, the Company shall file notice thereof in writing with the predecessor Rights Agent and each transfer agent of the Common Shares, and mail a notice thereof in writing to the registered holders of the Right Certificates. Failure to give any notice provided for in this Section 21, however, or any defect therein, shall not affect the legality or validity of the resignation or removal of the Rights Agent or the appointment of the successor Rights Agent, as the case may be.

Section 22. Issuance of New Right Certificates. Notwithstanding any of the provisions of this Agreement or of the Rights to the contrary, the Company may, at its option, issue new Right Certificates evidencing Rights in such form as may be approved by the Board to reflect any adjustment or change in the Purchase Price and the number or kind or class of shares or other securities or property purchasable under the Right Certificates made in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement.

Section 23. Redemption.

(a) The Board may, at its option, at any time prior to the earlier of (i) the Close of Business on the tenth Business Day following the Shares Acquisition Date (or, if the Shares Acquisition Date shall have occurred prior to the Record Date, the Close of Business on the tenth Business Day following the Record Date), or (ii) the Final Expiration Date, redeem all but not less than all the then outstanding Rights at a redemption price of \$0.001 per Right, as such amount may be appropriately adjusted to reflect any stock split, stock dividend or similar transaction occurring after the date hereof (such redemption price being hereinafter referred to as the "Redemption Price"). Notwithstanding anything contained in this Agreement to the contrary, the Rights shall not be exercisable after the first occurrence of a Section 11(a)(ii) Event until such time as the Company's right of redemption hereunder has expired. The Company may, at its option, pay the Redemption Price in cash or any other form of consideration deemed appropriate by the Board. The redemption of the Rights by the Board may be made effective at such time, on such basis and with such conditions as the Board, in its sole discretion, may establish.

(b) Immediately upon the action of the Board ordering the redemption of the Rights, evidence of which shall have been filed with the Rights Agent and without any further action and without any notice, the right to exercise the Rights will terminate and the only right thereafter of the holders of Rights shall be to receive the Redemption Price for each Right so held. The Company shall promptly give public notice of any such redemption; provided, however, that the failure to give, or any defect in, any such notice shall not affect the validity of such redemption. Within 10 days after the effectiveness of the action of the Board ordering the redemption of the Rights, the Company shall give notice of such redemption to the Rights Agent and the holders of the then outstanding Rights by mailing such notice to all such holders at each holder's last address as it appears upon the registry books of the Rights Agent or, prior to the Distribution Date, on the registry books of the transfer agent for the Common Shares; provided, that the failure to give, or any defect in, such notice shall not affect the validity of such redemption. Any notice which is mailed in the manner herein provided shall be deemed given, whether or not the holder receives the notice. Each such notice of redemption will state the method by which the payment of the Redemption Price will be made. Neither the Company nor any of its Affiliates or Associates may redeem, acquire or purchase for value any Rights at any time in any manner other than that specifically set forth in this Section 23 or in Section 24 hereof, and other than in connection with the purchase of Common Shares prior to the Distribution Date.

(c) Neither the Company nor any of its Affiliates or Associates may redeem, acquire or purchase for value any Rights at any time in any manner other than that specifically set forth in this Section 23 or in Section 24 hereof, and other than in connection with the purchase of Common Shares prior to the Distribution Date.

Section 24. Exchange.

(a) The Board may, at its option, at any time after any Person becomes an Acquiring Person, exchange all or part of the then outstanding and exercisable Rights (which shall not include Rights that have become null and void pursuant to the provisions of Section 7(e) or Section 11(a)(ii) hereof) for Common Shares at an exchange ratio of one Common Share per Right, appropriately adjusted to reflect any stock split, stock dividend or similar transaction involving either the Common Shares occurring after the date of this Agreement (such exchange ratio being hereinafter referred to as the "Exchange Ratio"). Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Board shall not be empowered to effect such exchange at any time after any Person (other than the Company, any Subsidiary of the Company, any employee benefit plan of the Company or any such Subsidiary, or any entity holding Common Shares for or pursuant to the terms of any such plan), together with all Affiliates and Associates of such Person, becomes the Beneficial Owner of fifty percent (50%) or more of the Common Shares then outstanding.

(b) Immediately upon the action of the Board ordering the exchange of any Rights pursuant to paragraph (a) of this Section 24 and without any further action and without any notice, the right to exercise such Rights shall terminate and the only right thereafter of a holder of such Rights shall be to receive that number of Common Shares equal to the number of such Rights held by such holder multiplied by the Exchange Ratio. The Company shall promptly give public notice of any such exchange; provided, however, that the failure to give, or any defect in, such notice shall not affect the validity of such exchange. The Company promptly shall mail a notice of any such exchange to all of the holders of such Rights at their last addresses as they appear upon the registry books of the Rights Agent. Any notice which is mailed in the manner herein provided shall be deemed given, whether or not the holder receives the notice. Each such notice of exchange will state the method by which the exchange of the Common Shares for Rights will be effected, and, in the event of any partial exchange, the number of Rights which will be exchanged. Any partial exchange shall be effected pro rata based on the number of Rights (other than Rights which have become null and void pursuant to the provisions of Section 7(e) and Section 11(a)(ii) hereof) held by each holder of Rights.

(c) In the event that there shall not be sufficient Common Shares authorized but unissued to permit any exchange of Rights as contemplated in accordance with this Section 24, the Company shall take all such action as may be necessary to authorize additional Common Shares for issuance upon exchange of the Rights. In the event the Company shall, after good faith effort, be unable to take all such action as may be necessary to authorize such additional Common Shares, the Company shall substitute, for any Common Share that would otherwise be issuable upon exchange of a Right, (i) cash, (ii) Equivalent Common Shares (as such term is defined in paragraph (a) of Section 11 hereof), (iii) debt securities of the Company, (iv) other assets or (v) any combination of the foregoing, in each case designed to have a value equal to one Common Share.

(d) Following the action of the Board ordering the exchange of any Rights pursuant to subsection (a) of this Section 24, the Company may implement such procedures in its sole discretion as it deems appropriate (but which do not affect the rights, duties, liabilities or responsibilities of the Rights Agent) for the purpose of ensuring that the Common Shares (or such other consideration) issuable upon an exchange pursuant to this Section 24 not be received by holders of Rights that have become null and void pursuant to Section 7(e) hereof, and provide reasonably prompt written notice thereof to the Rights Agent.

#### Section 25. Notice of Certain Events.

(a) In case the Company shall, at any time after the Distribution Date, propose (i) to pay any dividend payable in stock of any class to the holders of the Common Shares or to make any other distribution to the holders of the Common Shares (other than a regular periodic cash distributions in the ordinary course), (ii) to offer to the holders of the Common Shares rights or warrants to subscribe for or to purchase any additional Common Shares or shares of stock of any class or any other securities, rights or options, (iii) to effect any reclassification of the Common Shares (other than a reclassification involving only the subdivision of outstanding Common Shares), (iv) to effect any share exchange, consolidation or merger into or with, or to effect any sale or other transfer (or to permit one or more of its Subsidiaries to effect any sale or other transfer), in one transaction or a series of related transactions, assets, cash flow or earning power aggregating more than 50% of the assets, cash flow or earning power of the Company and its Subsidiaries (taken as a whole) to any other Person or Persons, (v) to effect the liquidation, dissolution or winding up of the Company, or (vi) to declare or pay any dividend on the Common Shares payable in Common Shares or to effect a subdivision, combination or consolidation of the Common Shares (by reclassification or otherwise than by payment of dividends in Common Shares) then, in each such case, the Company shall give to each holder of a Right Certificate, in accordance with Section 26 hereof, a notice of such proposed action (with a copy thereof to the Rights Agent), which shall specify the record date for the purposes of such stock dividend, or distribution of rights or warrants, or the date on which such share exchange, reclassification, consolidation, merger, sale, transfer, liquidation, dissolution, or winding up is to take place and the date of participation therein by the holders of the Common Shares, if any such date is to be fixed, and such notice shall be so given in the case of any action covered by clause (i) or (ii) above at least 10 days prior to but not including the record date for determining holders of the Common Shares for purposes of such action, and, in the case of any such other action, at least 10 days prior to but not including the date of the taking of such proposed action or the date of participation therein by the holders of the Common Shares, whichever shall be the earlier. The failure to give notice required by this Section 25 or any defect therein shall not affect the legality or validity of the action taken by the Company or the vote upon any such action.

(b) In case the event set forth in Section 11(a)(ii) hereof shall occur, then the Company shall, as soon as practicable thereafter, give to each holder of a Right Certificate, in accordance with Section 26 hereof, a notice of the occurrence of such event (with a copy thereof to the Rights Agent), which notice shall describe such event and the consequences of such event to holders of Rights under Section 11(a)(ii) hereof. The failure to give notice required by this Section 25 or any defect therein shall not affect the validity of the action taken by the Company or the vote upon any such action.

Section 26. Notices. Notices or demands authorized by this Agreement to be given or made by the Rights Agent or by the holder of any Right Certificate to or on the Company shall be sufficiently given or made if in writing and sent by overnight delivery service or first-class mail, postage prepaid, addressed (until another address is filed in writing with the Rights Agent) as follows:

ASA Gold and Precious Metals Limited  
Three Canal Plaza  
Portland, Maine 04101  
Attention: Zac Tackett  
zac.tackett@apexgroup.com  
(207) 347-2076

Subject to the provisions of Section 21 hereof, any notice or demand authorized by this Agreement to be given or made by the Company or by the holder of any Right Certificate to or on the Rights Agent shall be sufficiently given or made if in writing and sent by overnight delivery service or first-class mail, postage prepaid, addressed (until another address is filed in writing by the Rights Agent with the Company) as follows:

Computershare Trust Company, N.A.  
150 Royall Street  
Canton, Massachusetts 02021  
Attention: Client Services

Notices or demands authorized by this Agreement to be given or made by the Company or the Rights Agent to the holder of any Right Certificate shall be sufficiently given or made if in writing and sent by first-class mail, postage prepaid, addressed to such holder at the address of such holder as shown on the registry books of the Company.

Section 27. Supplements and Amendments. Prior to the Distribution Date and subject to the provisions of this Section 27, the Company may in its sole and absolute discretion and the Rights Agent shall, if the Company so directs, supplement or amend any provision of this Agreement (including but not limited to the Final Expiration Date) without the approval of any holders of Rights or Common Shares. From and after the Distribution Date and subject to the provisions of this Section 27, the Company may, and the Rights Agent shall, if the Company so directs, supplement or amend this Agreement without the approval of any holders of Right Certificates in order (i) to cure any ambiguity, (ii) to correct or supplement any provision contained herein which may be defective or inconsistent with any other provisions herein, (iii) to shorten or lengthen any time period hereunder or (iv) to change or supplement the provisions hereunder in any manner which the Company may deem necessary or desirable which shall not adversely affect the interests of the holders of Right Certificates (other than any interest an Acquiring Person or an Affiliate or Associate of an Acquiring Person has other than as a holder of Rights). In addition, the Company may and the Rights Agent shall, if the Company so directs, supplement or amend this Agreement without the approval of any holders of Common Shares following the occurrence of the Distribution Date but prior to a Section 13 Event either (x) in connection with any event specified in clauses (x), (y) and (z) of Section 13(a) in which all holders of Common Shares are treated alike and not involving (other than as a holder of Common Shares being treated like all other such holders) an Acquiring Person or an Affiliate or Associate of an Acquiring Person, or any other Person acting directly or indirectly on behalf of or in association with any such Acquiring Person, Affiliate or Associate, or (y) following the occurrence of a Shares Acquisition Date if and for as long as the Acquiring Person is not thereafter the Beneficial Owner of 15% or more of the Common Shares of the Company then outstanding, and at the time of such amendment or supplement there is no other Person who is an Acquiring Person. Upon the delivery of a certificate from an appropriate officer of the Company which states that the proposed supplement or amendment is in compliance with the terms of this Section 27, the Rights Agent shall execute such supplement or amendment. Prior to the Distribution Date, the interests of the holders of Rights shall be deemed coincident with the interests of the holders of Common Shares. Notwithstanding anything contained in this Agreement to the contrary, the Rights Agent may, but shall not be obligated to, enter into any supplement or amendment that affects the Rights Agent's own rights, duties, obligations or immunities under this Agreement. No supplement or amendment to this Agreement shall be effective unless duly executed by the Rights Agent and the Company.

Section 28. Successors. All the covenants and provisions of this Agreement by or for the benefit of the Company or the Rights Agent shall bind and inure to the benefit of their respective successors and assigns hereunder.



Section 29. Determinations and Actions by the Board, etc. For all purposes of this Agreement, any calculation of the number of shares of Common Share or any other class of capital stock outstanding at any particular time, including for purposes of determining the particular percentage of such outstanding shares of Common Share of which any Person is the Beneficial Owner, shall be made in accordance with the last sentence of Rule 13d-3(d)(1)(i) of the General Rules and Regulations under the Exchange Act. Without limiting the rights and immunities or expanding the duties or obligations of the Rights Agent, the Board shall have the exclusive power, authority and discretion to administer this Agreement and to exercise all rights and powers specifically granted to such Board or to the Company, or as may be necessary or advisable in the administration of this Agreement, including, without limitation, the right and power to (i) interpret the provisions of this Agreement, and (ii) make all determinations deemed necessary or advisable for the administration of this Agreement (including, but not limited to, a determination to redeem or not redeem the Rights, to amend the Agreement or to find or to announce publicly that any Person has become an Acquiring Person). All such actions, calculations, interpretations and determinations (including, for purposes of clauses (i) and (iii) below, all omissions with respect to the foregoing) which are done or made by the Board or the Company (i) shall be within the discretion of the Board, (ii) shall be final, conclusive and binding on the Company, the Rights Agent, the holders of the Right Certificates and all other parties, and (iii) shall not subject the Board to any liability to the holders of the Rights and Right Certificates. The Rights Agent is entitled always to assume that the Company's Board acted in good faith and shall be fully protected and incur no liability in reliance thereon.

Section 30. Benefits of this Agreement. Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to give to any Person other than the Company, the Rights Agent and the registered holders of the Right Certificates (and, prior to the Distribution Date, the Common Shares) any legal or equitable right, remedy or claim under this Agreement; but this Agreement shall be for the sole and exclusive benefit of the Company, the Rights Agent and the registered holders of the Right Certificates (and, prior to the Distribution Date, the Common Shares).

Section 31. Severability. If any term, provision, covenant or restriction of this Agreement is held by a court of competent jurisdiction or other authority to be invalid, void or unenforceable, the remainder of the terms, provisions, covenants and restrictions of this Agreement shall remain in full force and effect and shall in no way be affected, impaired or invalidated; provided, however, that notwithstanding anything in this Agreement to the contrary, if any such term, provision, covenant or restriction is held by such court or authority to be invalid, void or unenforceable and the Board determines in its good faith judgment that severing the invalid language from this Agreement would adversely affect the purpose or effect of this Agreement, the right of redemption set forth in Section 23 hereof shall be reinstated and shall not expire until the Close of Business on the tenth Business Day following the date of such determination by the Board or, if earlier, immediately prior to any such merger; provided, however, that if any such excluded term, provision, covenant or restriction shall affect the rights, immunities, duties or obligations of the Rights Agent in an adverse manner, the Rights Agent shall be entitled to resign immediately upon written notice to the Company. Without limiting the foregoing, if any provision requiring that a determination be made by less than the entire Board (or with the concurrence of specified directors) is held by a court of competent jurisdiction or other authority to be invalid, void or unenforceable, such determination shall then be made by the entire Board in accordance with applicable law and the Company's Articles of Incorporation and the Company's Bylaws, as such may be amended, supplemented or corrected from time to time. Furthermore, if such excluded provision shall affect the rights, immunities, liabilities, duties or obligations of the Rights Agent, the Rights Agent shall be entitled to resign immediately upon written notice to the Company.



Section 32. Governing Law. Except as provided in the following sentence, this Agreement and each Right Certificate issued hereunder shall be deemed to be a contract made under the laws of Bermuda and for all purposes shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of Bermuda applicable to contracts to be made and performed entirely within Bermuda; provided, that all provisions regarding the rights, duties, liabilities and obligations of the Rights Agent shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the state of Delaware applicable to contracts made and to be performed entirely within the state of Delaware. Notwithstanding the foregoing, all provisions of this Agreement and each Right Certificate issued hereunder relating to the liability and indemnification of the parties to this Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Delaware as if this Agreement was a contract made under the laws of such state applicable to contracts to be made and performed entirely within such state.

Section 33. Counterparts. This Agreement may be executed in any number of counterparts and each of such counterparts shall for all purposes be deemed to be an original, and all such counterparts shall together constitute but one and the same instrument. A signature to this Agreement transmitted electronically shall have the same authority, effect, and enforceability as an original signature.

Section 34. Descriptive Headings. Descriptive headings of the several Sections of this Agreement are inserted for convenience only and shall not control or affect the meaning or construction of any of the provisions hereof.

Section 35. Force Majeure. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained herein, the Rights Agent shall not be liable for any delays or failures in performance resulting from acts beyond its reasonable control including, without limitation, acts of God, epidemics, pandemics, terrorist acts, shortage of supply, breakdowns or malfunctions, interruptions or malfunction of computer facilities, or loss of data due to power failures or mechanical difficulties with information storage or retrieval systems, labor difficulties, war, or civil unrest.

Section 36. PATRIOT Act. Each Person that is a party hereto acknowledges that the Rights Agent is subject to the customer identification program ("Customer Identification Program") requirements under the USA PATRIOT Act and its implementing regulations, and that the Rights Agent must obtain, verify and record information that allows the Rights Agent to identify each such person or entity. Accordingly, prior to accepting an appointment hereunder, the Rights Agent may request information from any such person or entity that will help the Rights Agent to identify such person or entity, including without limitation, as applicable, such person or entity's physical address, tax identification number, organizational documents, certificate of good standing, license to do business, or any other information that the Rights Agent deems necessary. Each person or entity that is a party hereto acknowledges that the Rights Agent cannot accept an appointment hereunder unless and until the Rights Agent verifies each such person or entity's identity in accordance with the Customer Identification Program requirements.

Section 37. Rules of Construction. Unless the context otherwise requires:

- (a) A capitalized term has the meaning assigned to it;
- (b) References in the singular or to “it,” “itself,” or other like references, and references in the plural, as the case may be, shall also, when the context so requires, be deemed to include the plural or singular reference, as the case may be;
- (c) References to Sections shall refer to sections of this Agreement, unless otherwise specified;
- (d) All monetary figures shall be in United States dollars unless otherwise specified;
- (e) References to “including” in this Agreement shall mean “including, without limitation,” whether or not so specified;
- (f) References to “hereof,” “herein” and “hereunder” and words of similar import, when used in this Agreement, refer to this Agreement as a whole and not to any particular provision of this Agreement;
- (g) References to any law or to any provision of any law will include any modification, amendment or re-enactment thereof, any legislative provision substituted therefore and all rules, regulations and statutory instruments issued or related to such law; and
- (h) References to a Person are also to its permitted successors and assigns.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have caused this Agreement to be duly executed and attested, all as of the day and year first above written.

Attest:

ASA GOLD AND PRECIOUS METALS LIMITED

By: /s/ Zac Tackett  
Name: Zac Tackett  
Title: Secretary

By: /s/ Axel Merk  
Name: Axel Merk  
Title: Chief Operating Officer

Attest:

COMPUTERSHARE TRUST COMPANY, N.A.,  
as Rights Agent

By: /s/ Tyler Haynes  
Name: Tyler Haynes  
Title: Manager, Client Management

By: /s/ Drew Waford  
Name: Drew Waford  
Title: Assistant Vice President,  
Relationship Manager

Exhibit A

## Form of Right Certificate

Certificate No. R-

Rights

NOT EXERCISABLE AFTER THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON AUGUST 23, 2024, OR EARLIER IF REDEMPTION OR EXCHANGE OCCURS. THE RIGHTS ARE SUBJECT TO REDEMPTION AT \$0.001 PER RIGHT AND TO EXCHANGE ON THE TERMS SET FORTH IN THE AGREEMENT. UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, RIGHTS BENEFICIALLY OWNED BY AN ACQUIRING PERSON OR AN ASSOCIATE OR AFFILIATE OF AN ACQUIRING PERSON (AS SUCH TERMS ARE DEFINED IN THE RIGHTS AGREEMENT) AND ANY SUBSEQUENT HOLDER OF SUCH RIGHTS MAY BECOME NULL AND VOID. [THE BENEFICIAL OWNER OF THE RIGHTS REPRESENTED BY THIS RIGHT CERTIFICATE MAY BE AN ACQUIRING PERSON OR AN AFFILIATE OR ASSOCIATE (AS DEFINED IN THE RIGHTS AGREEMENT) OF AN ACQUIRING PERSON OR A SUBSEQUENT HOLDER OF A RIGHT CERTIFICATE BENEFICIALLY OWNED BY SUCH PERSONS. ACCORDINGLY, UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES AS PROVIDED IN THE RIGHTS AGREEMENT, THIS RIGHT CERTIFICATE AND THE RIGHTS REPRESENTED HEREBY WILL BE NULL AND VOID.]<sup>1</sup>

## Right Certificate

## ASA Gold and Precious Metals Limited

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_, or registered assigns, is the registered owner of the number of Rights set forth above, each of which entitles the owner thereof, subject to the terms, provisions and conditions of the Agreement, dated as of April 26, 2024 (the “Agreement”), between ASA Gold and Precious Metals Limited, a Bermuda exempted limited liability company (the “Company”), and Computershare Trust Company, N.A. (the “Rights Agent”), to purchase from the Company at any time after the Distribution Date (as such term is defined in the Agreement) and prior to the Close of Business (as such term is defined in the Agreement) on August 23, 2024, at the office or offices of the Rights Agent designated for such purpose, or at the office of its successor as Rights Agent, one common share, par value \$1.00 per share (the “Common Shares”), at a purchase price of \$1.00 per Common Share (the “Purchase Price”), upon presentation and surrender of this Right Certificate with the Form of Election to Purchase duly executed. The number of Rights evidenced by this Right Certificate (and the number of Common Shares which may be purchased upon exercise hereof) set forth above, and the Purchase Price set forth above, are the number and Purchase Price as of May 9, 2024, based on the Common Shares as constituted at such date. As provided in the Agreement, the Purchase Price and the number of Common Shares which may be purchased upon the exercise of the Rights evidenced by this Right Certificate are subject to modification and adjustment upon the happening of certain events.

<sup>1</sup> The portion of the legend in brackets shall be inserted only if applicable and shall replace the preceding sentence.

This Right Certificate is subject to all of the terms, provisions and conditions of the Agreement, which terms, provisions and conditions are hereby incorporated herein by reference and made a part hereof and to which Agreement reference is hereby made for a full description of the rights, limitations of rights, obligations, duties and immunities hereunder of the Rights Agent, the Company and the holders of the Right Certificates. Copies of the Agreement are on file at the principal executive offices of the Company and at the office or offices of the Rights Agent designated for such purpose.

This Right Certificate, with or without other Right Certificates, upon surrender at the office or offices of the Rights Agent designated for such purposes, may be exchanged for another Right Certificate or Right Certificates of like tenor and date evidencing Rights entitling the holder to purchase a like aggregate number of Common Shares as the Rights evidenced by the Right Certificate or Right Certificates surrendered shall have entitled such holder to purchase. If this Right Certificate shall be exercised in part, the holder shall be entitled to receive upon surrender hereof another Right Certificate or Right Certificates for the number of whole Rights not exercised.

Subject to the provisions of the Agreement, the Rights evidenced by this Right Certificate (i) may be redeemed by the Company at a redemption price of \$0.001 per Right or (ii) may be exchanged in whole or in part for Common Shares or other securities.

No fractional Common Shares will be issued upon the exercise of any Right or Rights evidenced hereby, but, in lieu thereof, a cash payment will be made, as provided in the Agreement.

No holder of this Right Certificate shall be entitled to vote or receive dividends or be deemed for any purpose the holder of the Common Shares or of any other securities of the Company which may at any time be issuable on the exercise hereof, nor shall anything contained in the Agreement or herein be construed to confer upon the holder hereof, as such, any of the rights of a shareholder of the Company or any right to vote for the election of directors or upon any matter submitted to shareholders at any meeting thereof, or to give or withhold consent to any corporate action, or to receive notice of meetings or other actions affecting shareholders (except as provided in the Agreement), or to receive dividends or subscription rights, or otherwise, until the Right or Rights evidenced by this Right Certificate shall have been exercised as provided in the Agreement.

This Right Certificate shall not be valid or obligatory for any purpose until it shall have been countersigned by the Rights Agent.

WITNESS the facsimile signature of the proper officers of the Company and its corporate seal.

Dated as of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_

Attest:

ASA GOLD AND PRECIOUS METALS LIMITED

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name: Zac Tackett

Title: Secretary

Countersigned:

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Axel Merk

Title Chief Operating Officer

COMPUTERSHARE TRUST COMPANY, N.A.,  
as Rights Agent

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Name:

Title:

A-3

## Form of Reverse Side of Right Certificate

FORM OF ASSIGNMENT

(To be executed by the registered holder if such holder desires to transfer the Right Certificate.)

FOR VALUE RECEIVED \_\_\_\_\_ hereby sells, assigns and transfers unto

(Please print name and address of transferee)

this Right Certificate, together with all right, title and interest therein, and does hereby irrevocably constitute and appoint \_\_\_\_\_ as Attorney in fact, to transfer the within Right Certificate on the books of the within-named Company, with full power of substitution.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

## Signature Guaranteed:

Signatures must be guaranteed by a member or participant in the Securities Transfer Agents Medallion Program ("STAMP"), the New York Stock Exchange Medallion Signature Program ("MSP"), or the Stock Exchanges Medallion Program ("SEMP") at a guarantee level reasonably acceptable to the Company's Transfer Agent. Guarantees by a notary public are not acceptable.

The undersigned hereby certifies that the Rights evidenced by this Right Certificate are not Beneficially Owned by an Acquiring Person or an Affiliate or Associate thereof (as defined in the Agreement).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

A-4



## Form of Reverse Side of Right Certificate – continued

FORM OF ELECTION TO PURCHASE

(To be executed if holder desires to exercise  
Rights represented by the Right Certificate.)

To: ASA Gold and Precious Metals Limited:

The undersigned hereby irrevocably elects to exercise \_\_\_\_\_ Rights represented by this Right Certificate to purchase the  
Common Shares issuable upon the exercise of such Rights and requests that certificates for such Common Shares be issued in the name  
of:

Please insert social security  
or other identifying number

---

(Please print name and address)

If such number of Rights shall not be all the Rights evidenced by this Right Certificate, a new Right Certificate for the balance  
remaining of such Rights shall be registered in the name of and delivered to:

Please insert social security  
or other identifying number

---

(Please print name and address)

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature

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A-5

#### Signature Guaranteed:

Signatures must be guaranteed by a member or participant in the Securities Transfer Agents Medallion Program (“STAMP”), the New York Stock Exchange Medallion Signature Program (“MSP”), or the Stock Exchanges Medallion Program (“SEMP”) at a guarantee level reasonably acceptable to the Company’s Transfer Agent. Guarantees by a notary public are not acceptable.

The undersigned hereby certifies that the Rights evidenced by this Right Certificate are not Beneficially Owned by an Acquiring Person or an Affiliate or Associate thereof (as defined in the Agreement).

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Signature

#### NOTICE

The signature in the Form of Assignment or Form of Election to Purchase, as the case may be, must conform to the name as written upon the face of this Right Certificate in every particular, without alteration or enlargement or any change whatsoever.

In the event the certification set forth above in the Form of Assignment or the Form of Election to Purchase, as the case may be, is not completed, the Company and the Rights Agent will deem the Beneficial Owner of the Rights evidenced by this Right Certificate to be an Acquiring Person or an Affiliate or Associate thereof (as defined in the Agreement) and such Assignment or Election to Purchase will not be honored.

Exhibit B

## SUMMARY OF RIGHTS TO PURCHASE COMMON SHARES

Introduction

On April 25, 2024, the Board of Directors of our Company, ASA Gold and Precious Metals Limited, a Bermuda exempted limited liability company, declared a dividend of one common share purchase right to purchase one common share (a “Right”) for each outstanding common share, par value \$1.00 per share (“Common Shares”). The dividend is payable to the shareholders of record on May 9, 2024.

Our Board has adopted this Rights Agreement to protect shareholders from coercive or otherwise unfair takeover tactics. In general terms, it works by imposing a significant penalty upon any person or group which acquires 15% or more of our outstanding Common Shares without the approval of our Board. The Rights Agreement should not interfere with any merger or other business combination approved by our Board.

For those interested in the specific terms of the Rights Agreement as made between our Company and Computershare Trust Company, N.A., as the Rights Agent, on April 26, 2024, we provide the following summary description. Please note, however, that this description is only a summary, and is not complete, and should be read together with the entire Rights Agreement, which has been filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission as an exhibit to a Registration Statement on Form 8-A dated April 29, 2024. A copy of the agreement is available free of charge from our Company. Capitalized terms used herein and not otherwise defined herein shall have the meanings given to them in the Rights Agreement.

*The Rights.* Our Board authorized the issuance of a Right with respect to each Common Share outstanding on May 9, 2024. The Rights will initially trade with, and will be inseparable from, the Common Shares. The Rights are evidenced only by certificates that represent Common Shares or by the registration of uncertificated Common Shares in the Company’s share register. New Rights will accompany any new Common Shares we issue after May 9, 2024, until the Distribution Date described below.

*Exercise Price.* Each Right will allow its holder to purchase from our Company one Common Share for \$1.00, once the Rights become exercisable. Prior to exercise, the Right does not give its holder any dividend, voting, or liquidation rights.

*Exercisability.* The Rights will not be exercisable until 10 business days after the public announcement that a person or group (subject to certain limited exceptions) has become an “Acquiring Person” by obtaining beneficial ownership (including any derivative security that increases in value as the value of Common Shares increase or that provides the holder with an opportunity to profit from any increase in the value of Common Shares) of 15% or more of our outstanding Common Shares. A shareholder owning 15% or more of our outstanding Common Shares at the time the Rights Agreement is adopted will not be deemed to be an Acquiring Person unless such shareholder acquires additional Common Shares representing 0.25% or more of the outstanding Common Shares.

We refer to the date when the Rights become exercisable as the “Distribution Date.” Until that date, the Common Share certificates and registration of uncertificated Common Shares in the Company’s share register will also evidence the Rights, and any transfer of Common Shares will constitute a transfer of Rights. After that date, the Rights will separate from the Common Shares and be evidenced by book-entry credits or by Right certificates that we will mail to all eligible holders of Common Shares. Any Rights held by an Acquiring Person are null and void and may not be exercised.

*Consequences of a Person or Group Becoming an Acquiring Person.*

- *Flip In.* If a person or group becomes an Acquiring Person, all holders of Rights (except the Acquiring Person) may, for \$1.00, purchase one Common Share. When calculating a person’s or group of affiliated or associated persons’ beneficial ownership to determine whether such person or group has become an Acquiring Person, if the person or any of that person’s affiliates or associates holds any option, warrant, convertible security, stock appreciation right or other contractual right or derivative with an exercise or conversion privilege or a settlement payment or mechanism at a price related to, or a value determined in reference to, Common Shares and that increases in value as the value of Common Shares increases or that provides the holder with an opportunity to profit from any increase in the value of Common Shares (a “Synthetic Long Position”), then that person shall be deemed to beneficially own the Common Shares in respect of such Synthetic Long Position.
- *Flip Over.* If our Company is later acquired in a merger or similar transaction after the Rights Distribution Date, all holders of Rights except the Acquiring Person may, for \$1.00, purchase one common share of the acquiring corporation.

*Expiration.* The Rights will expire on the close of business on August 23, 2024.

*Redemption.* Subject to the provisions of the Rights Agreement, our Board may at its option at a redemption price of \$0.001 per Right at any time prior to the earlier of (x) the Close of Business on the tenth Business Day following the Share Acquisition Date (or, if the Share Acquisition Date shall have occurred prior to the Record Date, the Close of Business on the tenth Business Day following the Record Date), or (y) the Final Expiration Date,

If our Board redeems any Rights, it must redeem all of the Rights. Once the Rights are redeemed, the only right of the holders of Rights will be to receive the redemption price of \$0.001 per Right. The redemption price will be adjusted if we have a stock split or stock dividends of our Common Shares.

*Exchange.* After a person or group becomes an Acquiring Person, but before an Acquiring Person owns 50% or more of our outstanding Common Shares, our Board may extinguish the Rights by exchanging one Common Share or an alternative security for each Right, other than Rights held by the Acquiring Person.

*Anti-Dilution Provisions.* Our Board may adjust the number of Common Shares issuable and the number of outstanding Rights to prevent dilution that may occur from a stock dividend, a stock split, a reclassification of the Common Shares.

*Amendments.* Until the Distribution Date, or thereafter under certain circumstances, the Company may amend the Rights in any manner. The Company may also amend the Rights Agreement after the Distribution Date to cure ambiguities, to correct defective or inconsistent provisions or in any manner that does not adversely affect the interests of holders of the Rights.

*Taxes.* While the dividend of the Rights will not be taxable to the shareholders or the Company, the shareholders or the Company may, depending upon the circumstances, recognize taxable income if the Rights become exercisable as set forth above.